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INVINCIBLE™

presents

VOLUME ONE

ATOM EVE & REX SPLODE

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ATOM EVE & REX SPLODE

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CHAPTER ONE

HURRY NOW, BUT GO EASY WITH HER--

--SHE'S GONE INTO LABOR!

PROGRAM

PLEASE, I'M TELLING YOU, YOU HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL WITH HER! SHE'S IN A VERY VOLATILE CONDITION RIGHT NOW! ANY KIND OF JOSTLING COULD BE QUITE DAMAGING!

SIR, IF YOU COULD PLEASE JUST--

NO, ACTUALLY, I'LL BE RIDING BACK HERE *WITH* HER, THANK YOU.

NOW PLEASE HURRY. WE MUST GET TO THE HOSPITAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT DRIVE CAREFULLY!

RING! RING!

BRANDYWORTH HERE. YES, HELLO, MR. ERICKSON.

THAT'S RIGHT, SHE HAS GONE INTO LABOR. I'M RIGHT HERE WITH HER IN THE AMBULANCE. WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO THE HOSPITAL RIGHT NOW.

YES, THE HOSPITAL. NO, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO MAKE OUR WAY TO THE MILITARY FACILITIES. THERE ISN'T TIME.

SHE'S TOO FAR INTO THE LABOR. WE'D NEVER MAKE IT TO THE BASE BEFORE SHE GAVE BIRTH, AND THE CHILD WILL NEED *IMMEDIATE* MEDICAL ATTENTION.

NO, MR. ERICKSON, I DON'T THINK *YOU* UNDERSTAND.

NONE OF OUR FETAL EXPERIMENTS HAVE EVER GOTTEN THIS FAR WITH ANY MEASURE OF SUCCESS! LISTEN TO ME AND DO WHAT I SAY AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR WEAPON!

TO TAKE THIS WOMAN TO YOUR FACILITIES NOW WOULD JEOPARDIZE HER LIFE, THE LIFE OF THE CHILD, AND THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT!

WELL, MR. ERICKSON, WE'RE PULLING INTO THE HOSPITAL AS WE SPEAK. YOU MAY SEND YOUR *MPS* TO COME GET ME HERE.

GOOD DAY, MR. ERICKSON.

EMERGENCY

YOU MUST MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT YOU DON'T APPLY ANY MORE MEDICATIONS THAN ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. NONE AT ALL, IF POSSIBLE. SHE'S TOO UNSTABLE.

PLEASE, YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO HER VITAL SIGNS, AND BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING WHEN--

SIR, CALM DOWN. WE'VE DONE HUNDREDS OF THESE DELIVERIES, MISTER...

DOCTOR BRANDYWORTH, THANK YOU. AND YOU CANNOT IMAGINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TASK AT HAND. THE CHILD ABOUT TO BE BORN HERE IS UNIQUE IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE SENSE! YOU MUST BE READY FOR ANY MANNER OF UNEXPECTED PHENOM--

YAAA

GO GO GO! FIND BRANDYWORTH! AND FIND THAT BABY!

MATERNITY-- WHERE IS IT?

U--UP... THIRD...

THIRD FLOOR, BOYS! GO GO GO!

THERE HE IS! BRANDYWORTH!

MP

CORPORAL, GRAB HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

YOU HEARD THE MAN, BRANDYWORTH. ARE YOU GONNA COME PEACEFULLY?

I DON'T PLAN ON RESISTING, ERICKSON. YOU SEE, YOU'RE TOO LATE. WE ALL WERE.

WE LOST THE CHILD.

YOU MAY SEE THE BODY IF YOU LIKE.

HONEY, THIS ISN'T YOUR FAULT. YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF. THE DOCTORS DID EVERYTHING THEY COULD. IT WASN'T YOU, IT WAS ME, AT MY AGE--

I--I'M SORRY, HONEY--I'M SO SORRY.

OH, ADAM!

MR. AND MRS. WILKINS?

Y-YES?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR BABY?

NURSE, IF THIS IS A JOKE, WE DON'T THINK IT'S VERY FUNNY.

ARE YOU *TRYING* TO HURT US? WE--WE LOST...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN... I HAVE YOUR BABY RIGHT HERE. THE DOCTORS HAD TO TAKE HER TO THE BACK AND DO SOME RATHER INTENSIVE WORK, BUT EVERYTHING WAS SUCCESSFUL, AND NOW SHE'S CLEANED UP AND READY TO MEET YOU.

NURSE, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HAPPY THIS MAKES US! WE THOUGHT WE HAD *LOST* HER!

BUT NOW SHE'S HERE, AND LOOK HOW PERFECT! OUR LITTLE BABY . . .

OUR SAMANTHA EVE WILKINS.

SCIENCE DOG

CINEMAS 7

NEXT TIME, ADAM-- I'LL PICK THE MOVIE. BUT AT LEAST SAMANTHA SLEPT THE WHOLE WAY THROUGH IT.

HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW HOW IT WAS? ALL I REMEMBER IS THE OLD COMICS AND CHEESY TV SHOW. I WASN'T EXPECTING ALL THAT SWEARING OR EXPLOSIONS OR RUBBER NIPPLES.

SIX... RUBBER... DOG... NIPPLES...

ALL I KNOW IS, NEXT TIME WE'LL SEE A MOVIE WITHOUT EXPLOSIONS.

AH, COME ON. IT WASN'T THAT BAD. AT LEAST SAMANTHA GOT A GOOD NAP IN. I MEAN, LOOK AT HER.

SHE'S SLEEPING LIKE A BABY.

BAH?

BAH?!

NUMMY NUM APPLE SAUCE. DO YOU LIKE THE APPLE SAUCE?

AHH.. AHH...

Kix

ARE YOU GOING TO SAY APPLE, SAMANTHA? ARE YOU? CAN YOU SAY IT?

AP... AP....

ADAM! GET IN HERE! I THINK SAMANTHA'S ABOUT TO SAY HER FIRST WORD!

SAY APPLE, SAM! LOOK AT IT! APPLE!

C-- C--

NO, BABY. "APP," LIKE BEFORE! "APPLE!" SAY "APPLE."

C-- C--

CH2OH

CH2OH-C-OH-C-H-OH-C-H-OH-C-CH2OH-C-H-O...

YES, MRS. WILKINS, SAM IS FINE. NO, SHE'S NOT MAKING ANY TROUBLE. YES MA'AM, SHE'S LETTING ME GET MY HOMEWORK DONE. UNFORTUNATELY.

OKAY, GOODBYE.

GRARR!

=SIGH= CHEMISTRY.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHY MERCURY IS A LIQUID EVEN THOUGH IT'S SURROUNDED BY SOLIDS ON THE PERIODIC TABLE?

BECAUSE ITS VALENCE SHELL IS 5D10 6S2, WHICH MAKES THE TWO OUTER-MOST ELECTRONS IN A SPHERICALLY SYMMETRIC, ENERGETICALLY STABLE QUANTUM STATE.

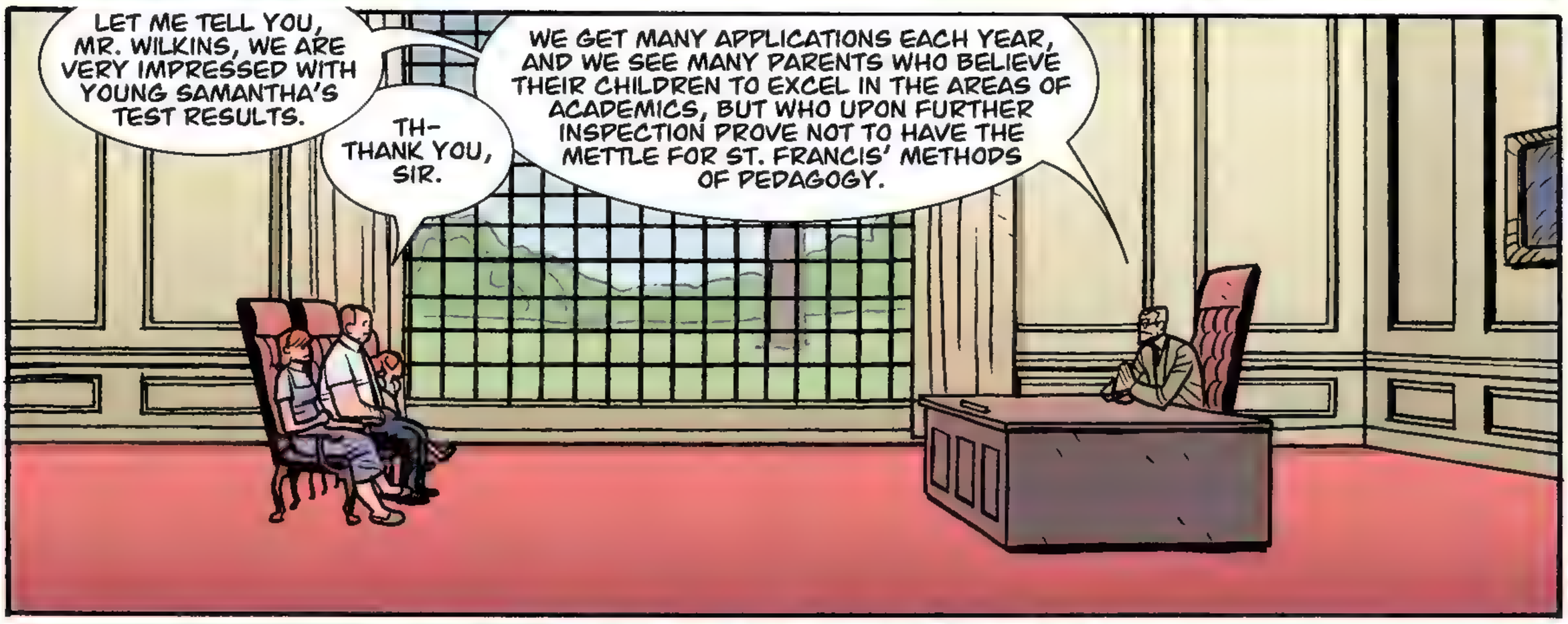
6S ELECTRONS ARE ESPECIALLY INERT, AND THEREFORE DON'T OFTEN FORM CHEMICAL BONDS. MERCURY ISN'T LIKELY TO GIVE UP ITS OUTER ELECTRONS, AND SO IT INTERACTS WITH OTHER ATOMS WEAKLY AT BEST. SO IT'S LIQUID AT ROOM TEMPERATURE.

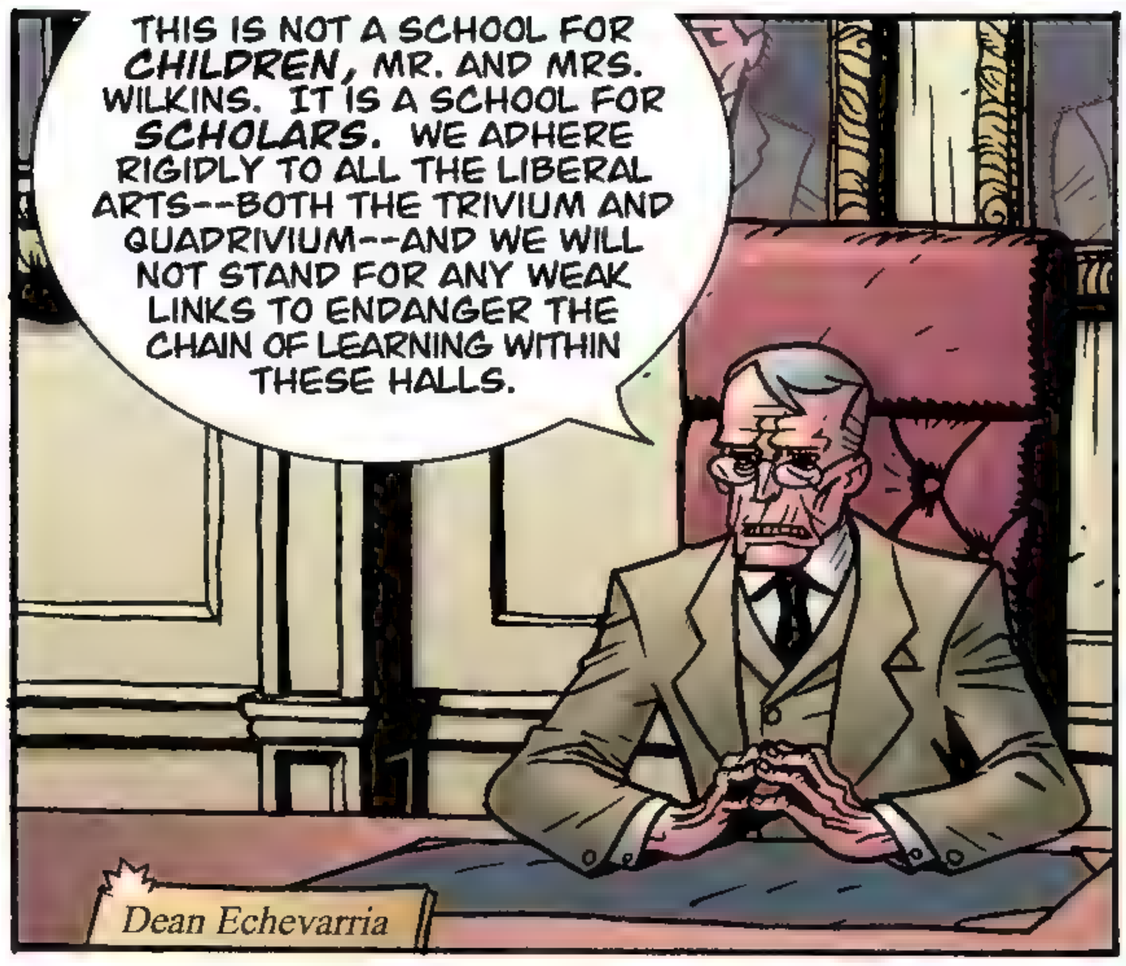
DORKFACE.

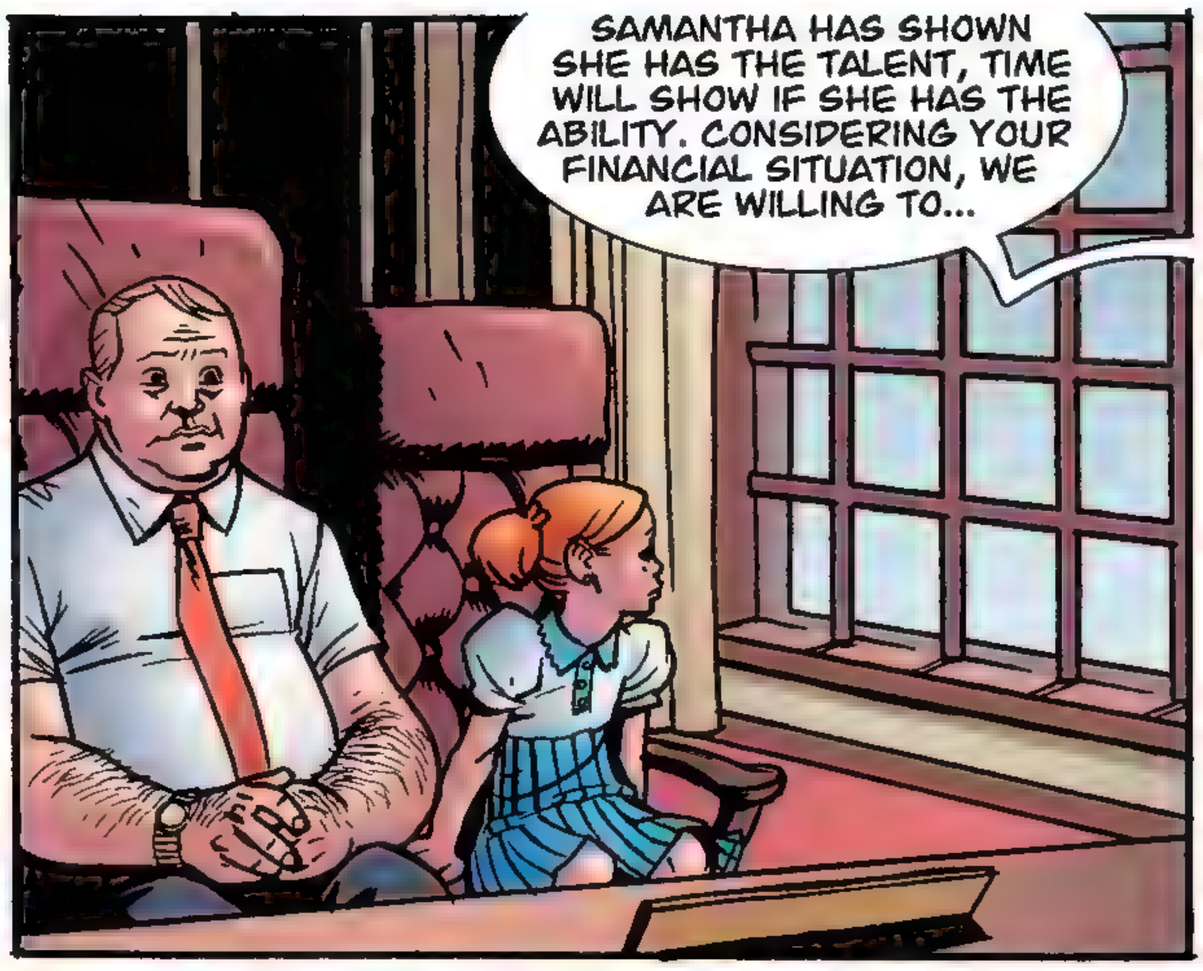
SO, UH... SAM?

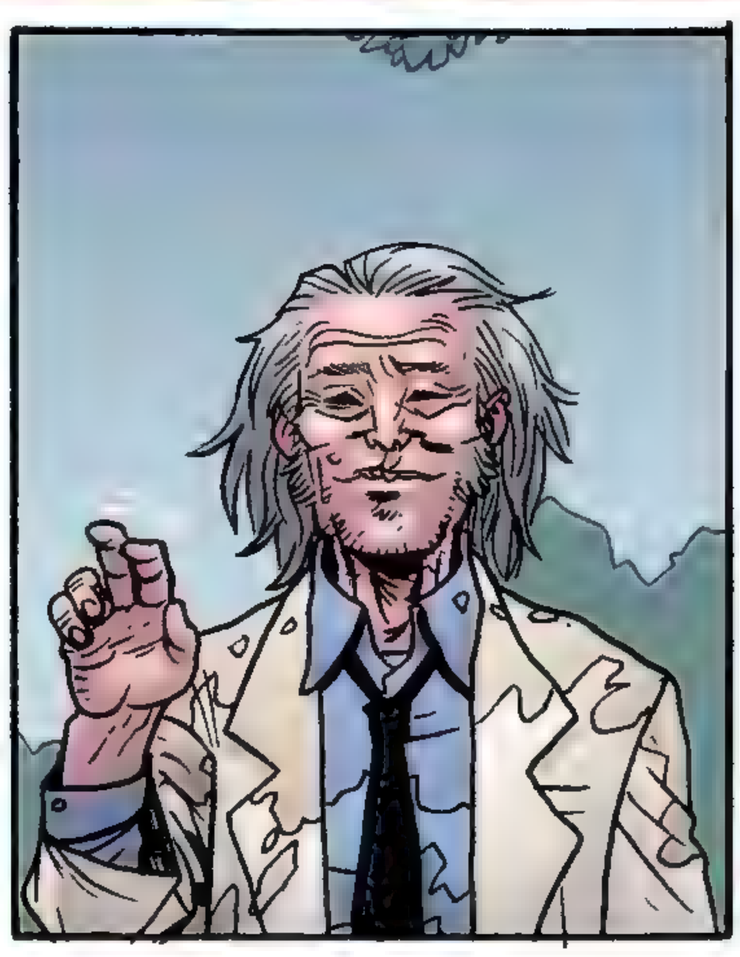
HOW'D YOU LIKE TO EARN SOME COOKIES BY TELLING ME HOW ATOMIC NUMBER RELATES TO ATOMIC MASS?

St. FRANCIS
SCHOOL FOR
EXCEPTIONAL YOUTHS


LET ME TELL YOU, MR. WILKINS, WE ARE VERY IMPRESSED WITH YOUNG SAMANTHA'S TEST RESULTS.
TH- THANK YOU, SIR.
WE GET MANY APPLICATIONS EACH YEAR, AND WE SEE MANY PARENTS WHO BELIEVE THEIR CHILDREN TO EXCEL IN THE AREAS OF ACADEMICS, BUT WHO UPON FURTHER INSPECTION PROVE NOT TO HAVE THE METTLE FOR ST. FRANCIS' METHODS OF PEDAGOGY.


THIS IS NOT A SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN, MR. AND MRS. WILKINS. IT IS A SCHOOL FOR SCHOLARS. WE ADHERE RIGIDLY TO ALL THE LIBERAL ARTS--BOTH THE TRIVIUM AND QUADRIVIUM--AND WE WILL NOT STAND FOR ANY WEAK LINKS TO ENDANGER THE CHAIN OF LEARNING WITHIN THESE HALLS.
Dean Echevarria


SAMANTHA HAS SHOWN SHE HAS THE TALENT, TIME WILL SHOW IF SHE HAS THE ABILITY. CONSIDERING YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION, WE ARE WILLING TO...



TO TELL THE TRUTH--

I DON'T CARE THAT THEY KICKED ME OUT!

YOU WATCH YOUR MOUTH, LITTLE LADY! THAT SCHOOL WAS THE BEST THING YOU HAD GOING FOR YOU!

THEIR STANDARDS WERE TOO HIGH, DAD! I'M JUST A LITTLE GIRL!

WOULD IT HAVE KILLED YOU TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK LIKE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO?

I *DID* DO MY HOMEWORK, DAD! BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR THEM!

AND WHAT WAS SO HARD YOU COULDN'T DO IT? YOU WERE AT THAT SCHOOL FOR YEARS WITHOUT ANY PROBLEM!

WHAT DOES IT EVEN MATTER, DAD? AS IF THAT'S EVEN THE ONLY PROBLEM!

IT'S SUCH A SCHOOL FULL OF REPRESSED FREAKS, I CAN'T EVEN BELIEVE IT! IF ONE MORE ACNE-LADEN NERD TELLS ME MY EPIDERMIS IS SHOWING, HE'S GOING TO GET A FISTFUL OF PHALANGES IN THE DUODENUM!

AND WHAT POSITION ARE YOU IN TO TALK ABOUT FREAKS, LITTLE MISS? HMM?

I WISH I WERE ADOPTED!

Sm
Samanthium
203.1
63.L2

I HATE THIS WHOLE FAMILY AND I WANT THEM TO EXPLODE! OR MELT! OR DECOMPOSE ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL!

SLAM!

NOK! NOK!

AHOY!

WHO IS IT AND GO AWAY!

NUCE DRACULA

SAM, HONEY, I BROUGHT YOU SOME DINNER. I DON'T WANT YOU STARVING UP HERE JUST BECAUSE YOU AND DAD HAD A FIGHT. I'LL LEAVE IT HERE. EAT IT WHEN YOU WANT.

OKAY, I HATE YOU LESS NOW, BUT HOW MUCH LESS DEPENDS ON WHAT DINNER *IS*.

108

YOU CAN GO AWAY NOW.

THANKS, MOM.

CHICKEN?!

I DON'T *WANT* CHICKEN-- I WANT--

...A CHEESE-BURGER?!

HMM...

HERE, HONEY, OPEN THIS ONE NEXT. IT'S FROM YOUR AUNT PENNY.

LOOK, EVE, IT'S PINK! YOUR FAVORITE!

...AWESOME.

NOT!

HMM...

AWESOME.

SAM, HONEY?

YES MA'AM?

WHERE'D YOU GET *THOSE* CLOTHES?

AUNT PENNY.

RANDOLPH ANIMAL SHELTER

ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF!

DUDE, THIS IS NOT COOL. THESE DOGS ARE WAY LOUD.

JUST SHUT UP AND PUT THEM IN THE VAN, DUDE. IF WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE FAST, IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW LOUD THEY ARE.

I KNOW THEY'RE LOUD AND THEY SMELL BAD, DUDE, BUT THESE THINGS ARE TOTALLY WORTH A MINT DOWN AT THE LAB. AND IF YOU CONSIDER THE RAMIFICATIONS OF PET OVER-POPULATION IN THESE UNITED STATES, WE'RE TOTALLY DOING THE WORLD A FAVOR.

YOU MAKE A TOTALLY SWEET POINT, DUDE.

AH! MY DAMN EYE! THAT DOG TOTALLY PISSED IN MY DAMN EYE!

HEY!

UNCOOL. WAY UNCOOL.

--THE HELL?

I SEE YOU'RE COVERED IN PEE.

UH... NO, I'M NOT.

PEE IS ACIDY--

--LET'S MAKE IT EVEN MORE ACIDY.

AHH! MY DAMN EYE!

RUN, DUDE! I THINK SHE'S A POWERPUFF GIRL!

NOW ALL I'VE GOT TO DO--

--IS MAKE SOFT AIR HARD--

--AND MAKE LIGHT MASKS HEAVY!

CLANG!

BOOYAH!

ALL RIGHT, DOGGIES, NO ONE WILL EXPERIMENT ON YOU NOW! I'LL JUST TURN ALL THESE CAGES INTO DOGGIE TREATS AND--

MISS WILKINS--

GAH!

MAD SCIENTIST!

MISS WI-- SAMANTHA-- I'M YOUR *FATHER.*

NO! YOU'RE NOT! MY FATHER IS A BIG, FAT MEANIE, NOT A LITTLE... CRAZY... *OLDIE!*

I'M...YOUR FATHER IN SPIRIT, ANYWAY. IT WAS BECAUSE OF *ME* THAT YOU WERE BORN. HAVE YOU NEVER WONDERED ABOUT YOUR FANTASTIC ABILITIES?

MISS WILKINS, PLEASE CALM DOWN--

WHY DO YOU KNOW MY NAME AND WHY DO I SEE YOU ALWAYS?

UHH... SOMETIMES?

YOU WERE BORN WITH THOSE POWERS BECAUSE I *DESIGNED* YOU TO BE. THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONED MY SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO CREATE THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON CONCEIVABLE--A CONTROLLABLE, HUMAN ATOM BOMB.

I DID THEM ONE BETTER. I MADE *YOU*. A LIVING, THINKING SCIENCE MACHINE. YOUR POTENTIAL IS UNLIMITED.

BUT I MADE A MISTAKE. I FELL IN LOVE--

--WITH YOUR MOTHER.

WHOA, SICK. MY MOTHER IS *NOT* HOT.

NOT BETSY WILKINS, SAMANTHA. YOUR *REAL* MOTHER.

I *KNEW* I WAS ADOPTED!

NOT ADOPTED IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE, NO. AS FAR AS THE WILKINSES KNOW, YOU ARE THEIR CHILD. I TRADED YOU WITH THEIR STILLBORN CHILD TO SAVE YOU FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

THAT'S *GROSS*, DUDE.

SAMANTHA, YOU *MUST* LISTEN TO ME. I RISKED MY LIFE TO SAVE YOU FROM THE FATE THAT THEY HAD IN STORE FOR YOU.

OKAY, SO... DON'T KILL PEOPLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT. *CHECK.*

NO! IT'S MORE THAN THAT! IF THEY KNOW YOU'RE ALIVE, THEY'LL COME FOR YOU! YOU MUST STAY HIDDEN!

AND ABOVE ALL--DO NOT USE YOUR POWERS IN PUBLIC!

SURE THING, "*DAD*." SEE YOU AT DINNER.

STOP, THIEF, IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

...OF WHICH I AM NOT A LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE.

THIS JOB JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER. NAME'S "KILLCANNON," GIRL! NOT "GETS BEATEN UP BY GIRLS CANNON." SO I DON'T THINK I'LL BE BEATEN UP BY A LITTLE GIRL.

WANT TO BET, KILLCANNON? I'LL BET YOU...LET'S SAY, TWO BRIEFCASES FULL OF MONEY.

I'LL TAKE THAT BET, YOU WANTON TART!

FUNT!

THAP!

"WANTON TART"? OUCH, MAN. THAT STINGS! TOO BAD I'M RUBBER--

THAP!

CHOOM!

--AND YOU'RE GLUE!

UNGH...

ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH SCIENCE FOR TODAY.

SOMETIMES A GIRL JUST NEEDS TO PUNCH SOMEBODY--

SOMEBODY WITH A SOUL PATCH.

MISS WILKINS--

FIRST OF ALL, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE IN EVERY SHADOW EVER, BUT IT'S CREEPY AND IT'S WEIRD, SO CUT IT OUT.

SECOND, I DON'T KNOW ANYONE BY THAT NAME. MY NAME IS ATOM EVE, THE TEEN QUEEN SUPREME.

"ATOM EVE." THAT'S VERY CUTE.

2

POW!

NO, THE CAPE IS CUTE. THE NAME IS AWESOME.

C'MERE, YOU.

NOW, CAN I HELP YOU WITH SOMETHING?

MISS WI--ER, ATOM EVE, I MUST SAY, YOU HAVE NOT BEEN HEEDING MY ADVICE TO LAY LOW. YOU *WILL* BE FOUND OUT IF YOU CONTINUE THIS COURSE OF ACTION!

KRAK!

THANKS FOR THE TALK, "DAD," BUT I'M USING PROTECTION. I *AM* WEARING A MASK.

WHUKK!

PLUS, I'M NOT THE ONE SHOUTING PEOPLE'S SECRET IDENTITIES WHILE THEY'RE FIGHTING, AM I?

NOT THAT HE SAID MY REAL NAME OR ANYTHING, DID HE, KILLCANNON?

'SRIGHT, YOU HEARD NOTHING.

UNGH.

HOW MUCH *MORE* CAREFUL COULD I BE?

REC

Cringeleaf's BAR & GRILL

UNITED STATES PENTAGON

Parking in Rear

HOW MUCH CLEARER COULD I BE?!

WE DON'T HAVE THE BUDGET FOR THESE KINDS OF FAILURES ANYMORE, GENTLEMEN.

WE NEED ANOTHER SOLID SUCCESS IN THE AREA OF SUPER SOLDIERS BEFORE OUR ENTIRE BRANCH GETS SHUT DOWN.

WELL, THERE IS BRIT...

YES, DONALD, THERE *IS* BRIT. AND BRIT IS... WHAT? EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS OLD? HIS DAYS ARE NUMBERED. WE NEED NEW BLOOD.

RODGERS, HOW ARE YOUR EXPERIMENTS COMING? HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO REPLICATE BRANDYWORTH'S WORK YET?

IN ALL FAIRNESS, SIR, I THINK WE MAY BE WASTING OUR TIME THERE. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF BRANDYWORTH'S WORK WAS A SUCCESS. EVEN IF THE BABY HAD LIVED--

BRANDYWORTH WAS A *HACK*, RODGERS! THE FACT THAT HE WAS ABLE TO EVEN GET *CLOSE* TELLS ME THAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO REPLICATE IT!

WELL, MAYBE IF HE HAD LEFT SOME OF HIS NOTES BEHIND WHEN HE WENT INTO HIDING--

SHUT IT, TOOL! YOU ARE A SUPER-SCIENTIST! YOU WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT! YOU ARE COVERED IN WEIRD, ROBOTY CRAP! YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE ME *SOMETHING*--

--ANYTHING BETTER THAN THIS!

SIR, I DID EVERYTHING I--

I SAID SHUT IT!

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO CLONE JESUS FROM SCRATCH HERE, RODGERS.

ALL I WANT IS SOMEONE WHO CAN BLOW THINGS UP WITH MIND BULLETS WHEN I ASK!

IS THAT SO MUCH? DONALD?

ER, NO, MR. ERICKSON.

AND WHAT DO YOU GIVE ME? THIS MELTY, JUMBLEDY, GARBLEY GARBAGE!

I WANT THEM ALL DESTROYED. GET THEM OUT OF MY SIGHT.

SIR, NO!

I'M NOT GOING TO BE SWAYED, DONALD, SO KEEP THE WEEPY-WEEPY INSIDE.

UH, MR. ERICKSON?

YOU MIGHT WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT THIS.

A NEW SUPERHERO? SO?

GEM ROBBERY THWARTED

NO, HE'S RIGHT. THIS NEWS REPORT SAYS THIS GIRL IS DISPLAYING POWERS AND ABILITIES NOT UNLIKE BRANDYWORTH'S ORIGINAL EXPERIMENT, THE ONE WE LOST. AND, SIR... DOESN'T SHE REMIND YOU OF SOMEONE?

BELAY THAT DESTRUCTION ORDER, DONALD. I MAY HAVE A USE FOR THOSE FREAKS AFTER ALL.

AH HAH!

I KNEW THAT WOULD WORK. I SAID TO MYSELF, "EVE, WHERE MIGHT YOU BE TODAY THAT HAS AN ALLEY NEARBY? I BET THAT'S WHERE DOCTOR STALKENSTEIN IS HIDING TODAY!" AND I WAS RIGHT!

BREAD | DELI | DAIRY | WE SELL FOOD! | SHOP E MART

AH, SAMANTHA. THERE YOU ARE. AND WHAT A RELIEF TO SEE YOU, AND ESPECIALLY TO SEE YOU NOT OUT DANGEROUSLY FLAUNTING YOUR ABILITIES.

GOSH, I THOUGHT I MIGHT ACTUALLY GET TO SKIP THE LECTURE TODAY, BUT GO AHEAD, LAY IT ON ME.

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO LECTURE YOU, SAMANTHA. I CAME--

--I CAME TO WISH YOU A HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

WHAT? SERIOUSLY? MY OWN DAD FORGOT MY BIRTHDAY... HOW DID YOU KNOW IT?

YES. WELL. I WAS THERE, AFTER ALL. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR ME, AS WELL.

BREAD

I'M SORRY. I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN. YOU'VE KNOWN ME MY ENTIRE LIFE, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME.

MY NAME IS DR. ELIAS BRANDYWORTH, AND UNTIL THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, I USED TO BE AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE PENTAGON'S SUPERHUMAN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH.

SINCE THEN, THOUGH, I MOSTLY EAT OUT OF TRASH CANS.

I NOTICE YOU'VE MANAGED TO KEEP YOUR LAB COAT CRISP AND WHITE, THOUGH.

DR

YES. WELL. I DIDN'T DO ALL THOSE YEARS OF POST-GRADUATE WORK TO BE KNOWN AS *MISTER* BRANDYWORTH, EVEN AMONG HOBOS.

WELL, **DOCTOR** BRANDYWORTH, WHY DON'T WE GO GET A CUP OF COFFEE OR SOMETHING? MY TREAT.

SO, DOC, IF YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT MY PAST, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT MY MOTHER?

Y-YOUR MOTHER?

YEAH, YOU SAID YOU KNEW HER, AND OBVIOUSLY SHE WAS PART OF YOUR EXPERIMENT.

MIYAZAL

SHE WAS A LOVELY WOMAN. YOU REMIND ME OF HER QUITE A BIT, ACTUALLY.

SO WAS SHE YOUR LAB ASSISTANT OR SOMETHING? IS THAT WHERE MY SCIENCE SMARTS COME FROM?

21+ DOORS 8PM
$10 COVER

AH...YES. YES, THAT'S PRECISELY IT.

DOC, I'M SORRY. OBVIOUSLY THAT'S A SORE SUBJECT. LET'S JUST GO GET THAT--

--COFFEE?

SAMANTHA--

SAMANTHA, NO! THEY WILL FIND YOU!

THEY HAVEN'T FOUND ME YET, DOC! WHAT IF THE POLICE CAN'T HANDLE THIS? WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS HURT? I'VE GOTTA GO.

DOC...I GOTTA.

YES, BUT WHAT IF--?

I CAN'T LOSE YOU, TOO.

WEEKLY freebie

CHAPTER TWO

THIS LOOKS LIKE A BIG ONE! I WONDER WHAT IT IS? BANK ROBBERY? MAN, I BET THERE ARE HOSTAGES!

JEEZ, LOOK AT ALL THOSE COPS! I THINK I'M ABOUT TO GRADUATE TO BIG-LEAGUE CRIME-FIGHTING!

LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT THAT "HARD-HITTING EXPOSÉ" SAID--*CAPES INCORPORATED* DOESN'T EMPLOY LITTLE GIRLS IN PINK SKIRTS.

SO YOU'RE SAYING THEY'RE NOT LOOKING FOR ONE OF YOURS.

THAT IS WHAT I'M SAYING, YES.

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM, OFFICERS?

HOSTAGE SITUATION, BAD GUYS WON'T LET ANYONE GO UNTIL--WAIT A MINUTE! YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE ONE THEY'RE LOOKING FOR!

WAIT, WHAT?

PINK SKIRT, RED HAIR... THEY'RE ASKING FOR YOU--THAT'S WHY THEY'RE HERE. WE DIDN'T HAVE YOU ON FILE...

ATOM EVE. STAND ASIDE, JOHNNY LAW.

WAIT, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE UP TO THIS? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT *EIGHT*.

DUDE, NO, IT'S TOTALLY COOL. BIG TIME HERO.

NO SWEAT.

R.OTT

SO THE REPORTS WERE TRUE-- YOU ARE ALIVE.

IF YOU BEHAVE, YOU'LL GET TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

I-I'M SORRY, D-DO I KNOW YOU?

I SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE IN A TUBE.

AFTER YOU "DIED," THEY THOUGHT THEY'D TRY AGAIN-- MOVE ON.

SO I WAS BORN, AND THEY TRIED TO TEACH ME TO BE AS GOOD AS--HTT!

AH!

AS GOOD AS YOU, THE DAUGHTER WHO WAS PERFECT IN THEIR MINDS.

SPLAT!

I-I'M SOR--

AND I TRIED AND TRIED AND FAILED AND FAILED TO LIVE UP TO THE PICTURE OF YOU IN THEIR MINDS, AND THEY'D STICK ME BACK IN THE TUBE.

TO THEM, YOU HAD NO FLAWS, BECAUSE THEY'D *NEVER EVEN MET YOU!* HOW COULD I COMPETE?

AND NOW IT TURNS OUT YOU'RE ALIVE. AND YOU *ARE* AS PERFECT AS THEY SAID.

AND I HATE YOU FOR IT!

SPLAT!

WE ALL DO.

THE LITTLE ONES MIGHT EVEN HATE YOU MORE THAN I, IN FACT. BUT THEY COULDN'T TELL YOU IN SO MANY WORDS.

UNLIKE MYSELF, THEY WERE NEVER OUT OF THE TUBE LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN TO TALK.

WRAKK!

BUT THEY'VE FOUND OTHER WAYS TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS FOR YOU.

THAT WAY, YOU IDIOTS! SHE'S OVER THERE!

DEAR GOD, I'VE BEEN A GOOD GIRL THIS YEAR. PLEASE EXCHANGE THESE SCARY CHILDREN FOR FIVE TINY KILLCANNONS AND I WON'T ASK FOR ANYTHING ELSE AS LONG AS I LIVE. LOVE, SAM. XOXO.

NO HIDING!

SKROOM!

HAI!

SHUNK!

YOU--YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL ME, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME.

MY NAME?

MY NAME IS PHASE TWO, TAKE TWO, TRY AGAIN. SECOND BORN, SECOND BEST.

MY NAME IS "GET BACK IN THE TUBE, BOY! YOU MAKE ME SICK!"

SHOES.

WALKERS

BONK!

SHOES.

NO!

SODIUM... HYDROGEN, CARBON... THREE PARTS OXYGEN...

SHOES.

STEADY, STEADY...

GAH!

THAT'S ABOUT ENOUGH OF THAT.

WHUMM

AHUH...
AHUH...
AHUH...

OH...OH, GOD. I HOPE THOSE HOSTAGES ARE GETTING AWAY SAFELY. OH, GOD.

KROOM!!

KNOCK, KNOCK, SIS.

WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE WHO WE FOUND OUT IN THE CROWD LOOKING FOR YOU.

EVE...EVE, I'M SO SORRY.

NO!

SHLUK!

SHLUK!

SHLUK!

SHLUK!

COME ON, DOC! THIS WAY!

DVDS

OKAY, DOC, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME MY POWERS HAVE LIMITS? THOSE KIDS CHANGE INTO THINGS, I CAN'T CHANGE THEM BACK. ATOMS ***AROUND*** THEM, ATOMS ***INSIDE*** THEM--AS YOU SAW--OKAY, BUT NOT ***THEM.*** WHAT'S GOING ON?

I...I HAD TO DO IT, EVE. OTHERWISE YOU'D BE OMNIPOTENT. WE HAD TO GIVE YOU LIMITS.

YOU COULD TURN BLOOD TO CHOCOLATE OR HEARTS TO BUNNIES. YOU COULD EVEN ALTER MINDS BY AFFECTING THE CHEMICALS IN PEOPLE'S BRAINS... WE COULDN'T HAVE THAT. NOTHING SHOULD BE THAT POWERFUL.

THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THAT WAS TO IMPLANT A MENTAL BLOCK--TO GIVE YOU A SUBCONSCIOUS REFUSAL TO ALTER LIVING ANIMAL MASS.

YES, BUT--

UNH!

YOU LEAVE MY DADDY ALONE!

KRAKA-DOOM!

OKAY, SIS...

SHUK!

KRAK!

IT'S ON!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME?

WHY? YOU, SISTER, ARE THE ONLY REASON WE EXIST! OUR SINGULAR PURPOSE IN CREATION, OUR DESTINY, IS TO DO--

KHOOM!!

--THIS!

WROKK!

TO DO THIS-- UNF--

GOOM!

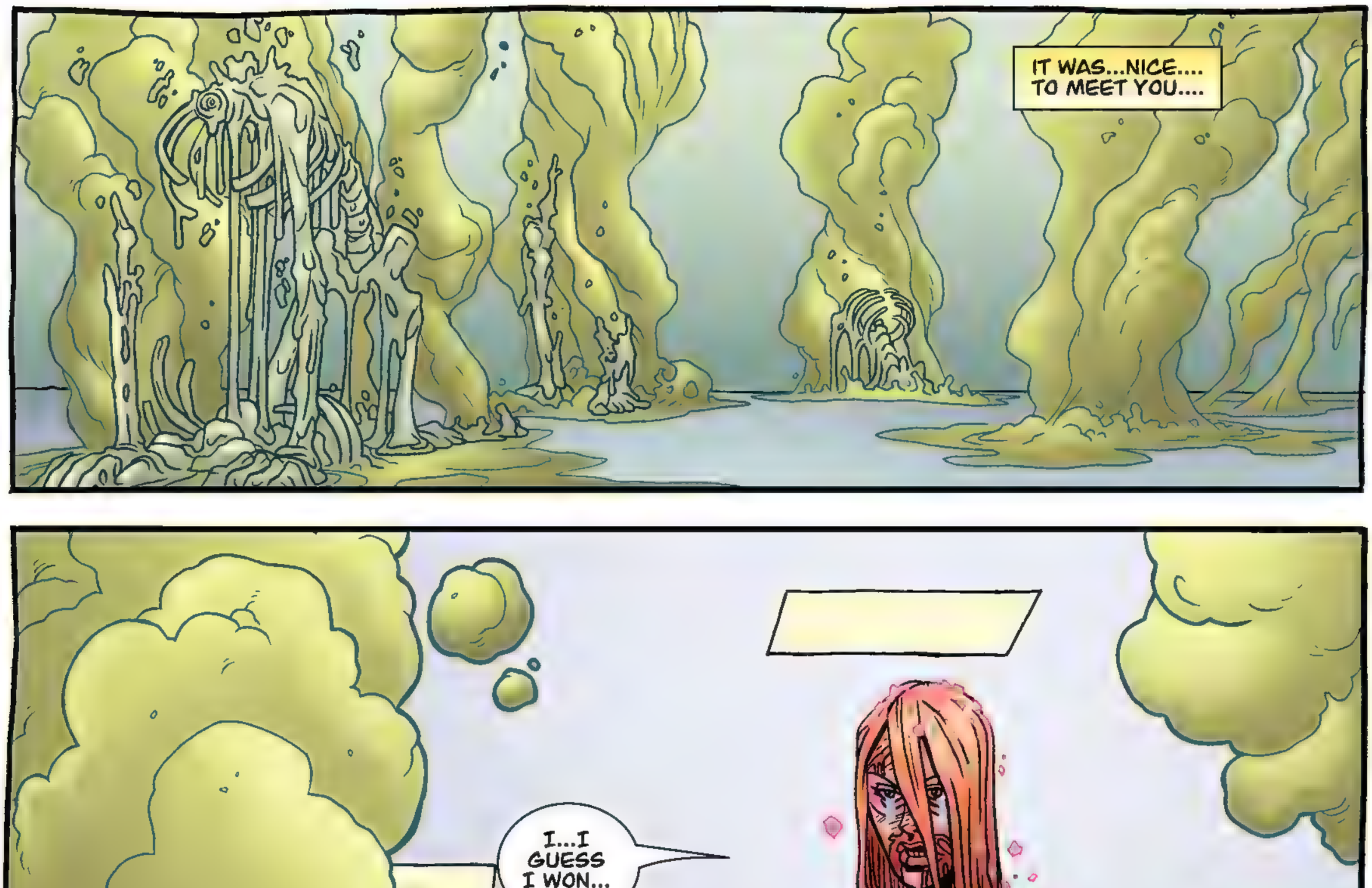
TO DO THIS, AND THEN TO DIE.

NO GOOD OUT OF THE TUBE--NOT FOR LONG AT LEAST. NO MATTER, THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT US, NOW.

NOW THEY HAVE *YOU.*

WHAT?!

GOOD-BYE, EVE.


IT WAS...NICE....
TO MEET YOU....
I...I GUESS I WON...
...
HOORAY.

EVE!

PLEASE
• NO PETS
• NO SKATING
• NO LITTERING

DOC...

THIS SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED. THEY SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME OUT OF THEIR TANKS. THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN MADE AT ALL. THEY WEREN'T STABLE. THEY WEREN'T PERFECT--

--NOT LIKE YOU.

DOC, I NEED YOU TO TELL ME...

TELL YOU WHAT, SAMANTHA?

ARE... ARE YOU MY REAL FATHER?

EVE, I--

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

AWW, SO VERY SWEET.

NOW COME ALONG QUIETLY. WE DON'T WANT TO DRAW ANY UNDUE ATTENTION TO OURSELVES.

YOU...YOU CAME IN A HELICOPTER.

FIGURE OF SPEECH, CHICLET. NOW GET IN THE CHOPPER.

BRIGHT BOY

SAUSAGE KING

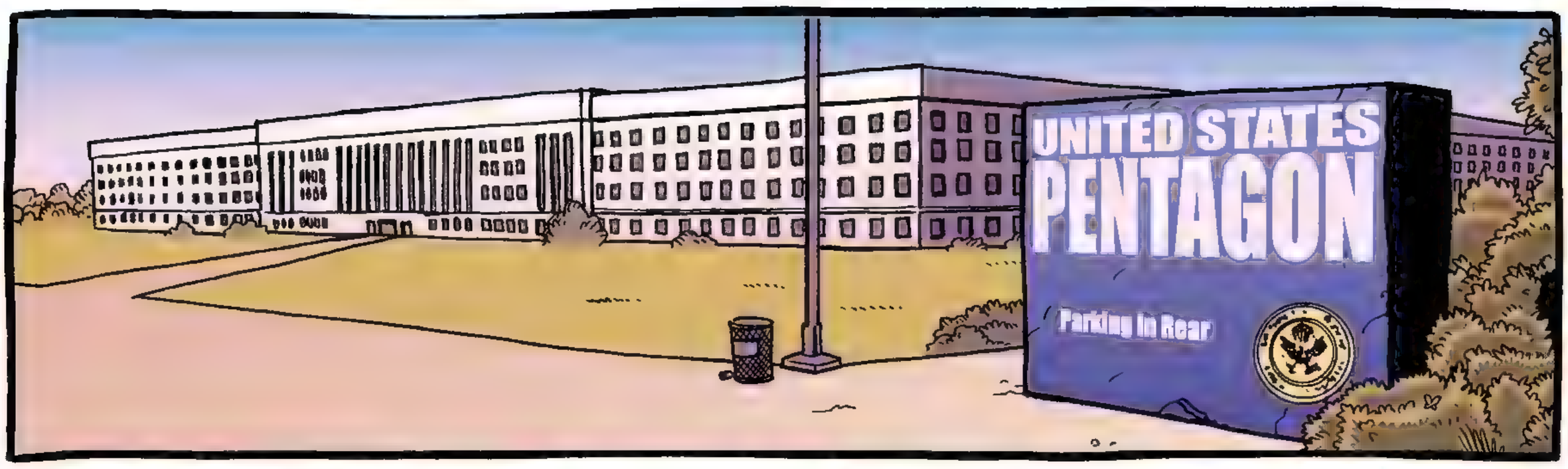
I DON'T WANT ANY FANCY SCIENCE GOING ON IN HERE. I SEE SO MUCH AS A FLASH OF PINK, AND I PAINT THE CHOPPER WITH THE INSIDES OF DOC'S HEAD.

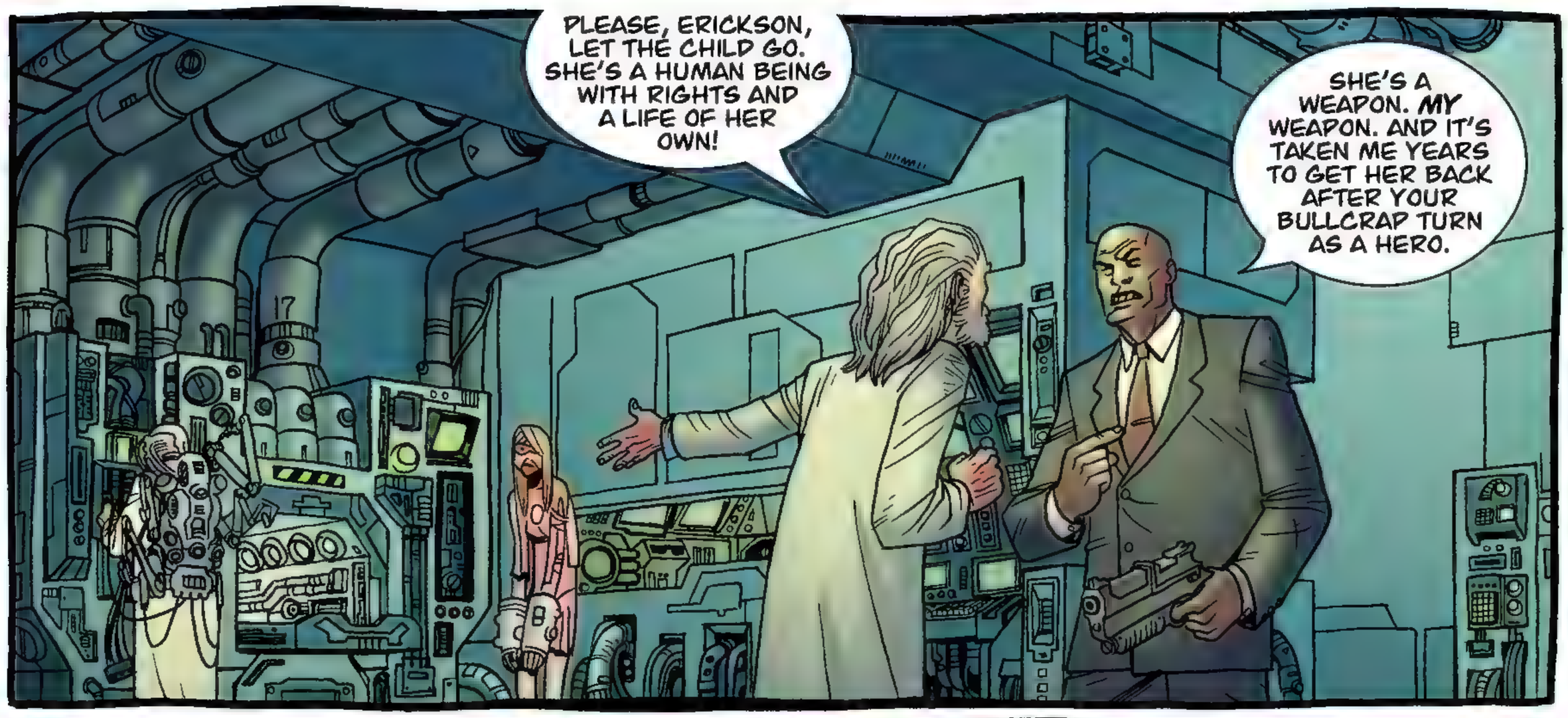
WHY DID YOU KILL THEM?

KILL WHO? TERRORISTS? HIPPIES? BUDDY HOLLY AND THE BIG BOPPER? YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC.

THOSE CHILDREN. WHY DID YOU KILL THOSE CHILDREN?

TO GET TO *YOU*, DOLLFACE. YOU'RE WORTH A THOUSAND MELTY CHILDREN.


UNITED STATES
PENTAGON
Parking In Rear


PLEASE, ERICKSON, LET THE CHILD GO. SHE'S A HUMAN BEING WITH RIGHTS AND A LIFE OF HER OWN!
SHE'S A WEAPON. MY WEAPON. AND IT'S TAKEN ME YEARS TO GET HER BACK AFTER YOUR BULLCRAP TURN AS A HERO.
OKAY, I SURRENDER MYSELF. DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH ME, JUST LET DOCTOR BRANDYWORTH GO.
HA HA HA! LET HIM GO? CHILD, THAT'S FUNNY. THE GOOD DOC KNOWS FULL WELL THAT TREASON IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON, AND THAT SEASON--
--IS DEATH CHRISTMAS.
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO WITH ME. THERE'S LITTLE LEFT FOR ME TO LIVE FOR ANYWAY. BUT LET THE CHILD GO. DON'T KILL HER WITH THIS LIFE LIKE YOU DID TO HER MOTHER.
HA! YOU THINK WE KILLED HER MOTHER? RODGERS, IF YOU PLEASE.
TEK

WHERE IS IT YOU THINK WE GOT ALL THOSE OTHER CHILDREN FROM? MAIL ORDER?

YOU MONSTER!

NO!

UH UH.

I DON'T THINK SO.

SEEING YOUR LITTLE WOMAN REALLY MADE YOU COME ALIVE, EH, DOC?

IRK!

WE DON'T NEED HER ANYMORE NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THE REAL THING, AM I RIGHT?

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

BASTARD!

NNG!

OH, I'M GOING TO ENJOY THIS.

BLAM!

NO!

AND ONE TO GROW ON.

BLAM!

YOU... BASTARDS...

...KILLED...

...MY WHOLE FAMILY.

SIR, WE HAVE TO ACT QUICKLY! THIS SEVERE TRAUMA MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO OVERRIDE THE MENTAL DAMPERS WE PLACED ON HER TO KEEP HER FROM AFFECTING LIVING--

THEN SHUT YOUR PORKHOLE AND LET ME SHOOT!

KLK.
KLK.
KLK.

KSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!

GAH!

I SEE IT ALL NOW-- ALL OF IT. EVERY LITTLE PIECE OF MATTER THAT MAKES UP EVERY LITTLE THING AROUND US. I CAN TOUCH IT, TASTE IT--CONTROL IT. NOTHING IS BEYOND MY REACH.

SENTIENT ORGANIC CONSTRUCTS ARE BUT A REFLEX AWAY-- I COULD REARRANGE THE CELLS OF YOUR BRAIN TO CREATE AN ENTIRELY NEW PERSONALITY--A NEW PERSON.

I COULD KILL YOU BY CHANGING WHO YOU ARE. YOU WOULD DESERVE IT TOO!

YOU RUINED MY LIFE! YOU TOOK EVERYTHING FROM ME!

YOU HUNTED ME AND HOUNDED ME AND KILLED EVERYTHING I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YET THAT I LOVED!

AND NOW I **DEFY** YOU.

I AM **SAMANTHA EVE WILKINS**, AND I DEFY YOU TO EVEN REMEMBER WHO I AM!

GKK.

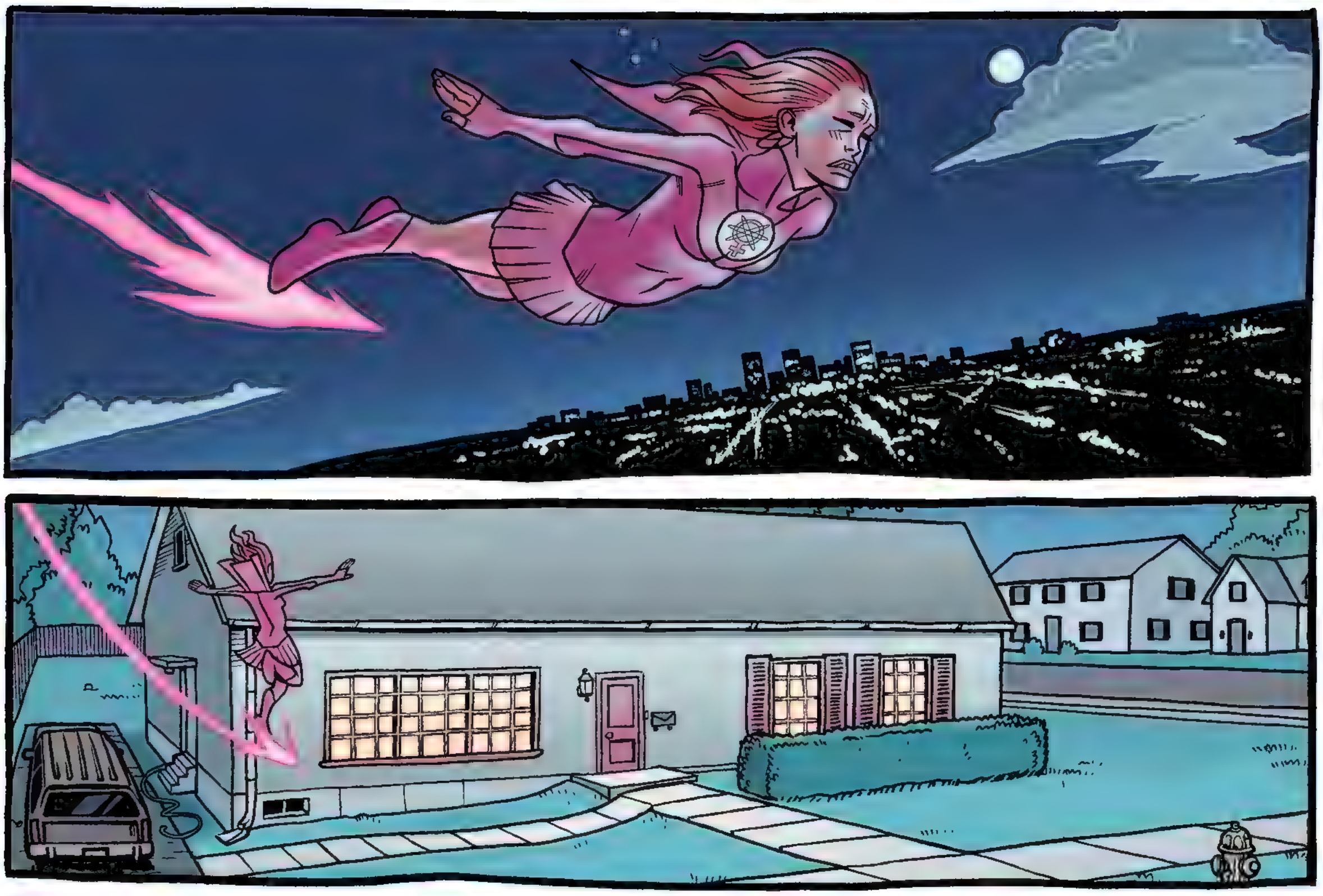
AHUH...
AHUH...
HH...

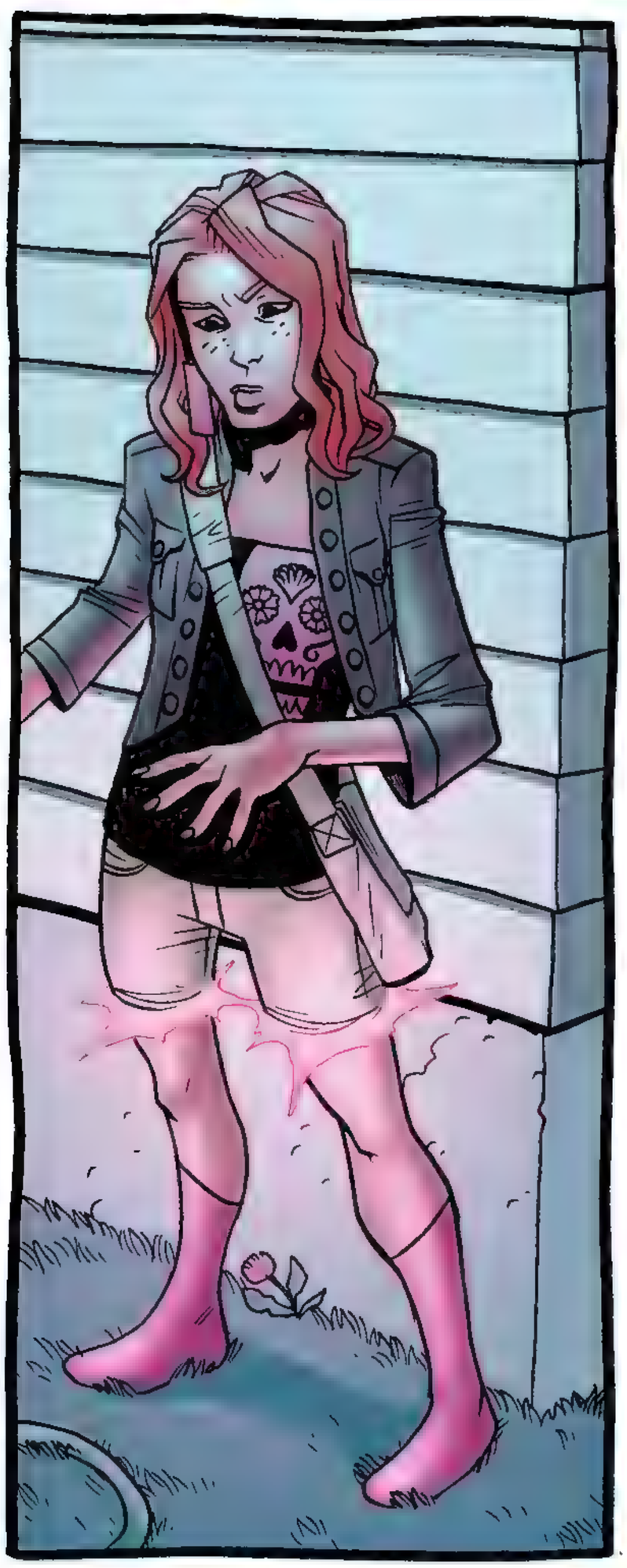
FOR ONE MOMENT, I HAD THE POWER. I COULD HAVE FIXED IT.

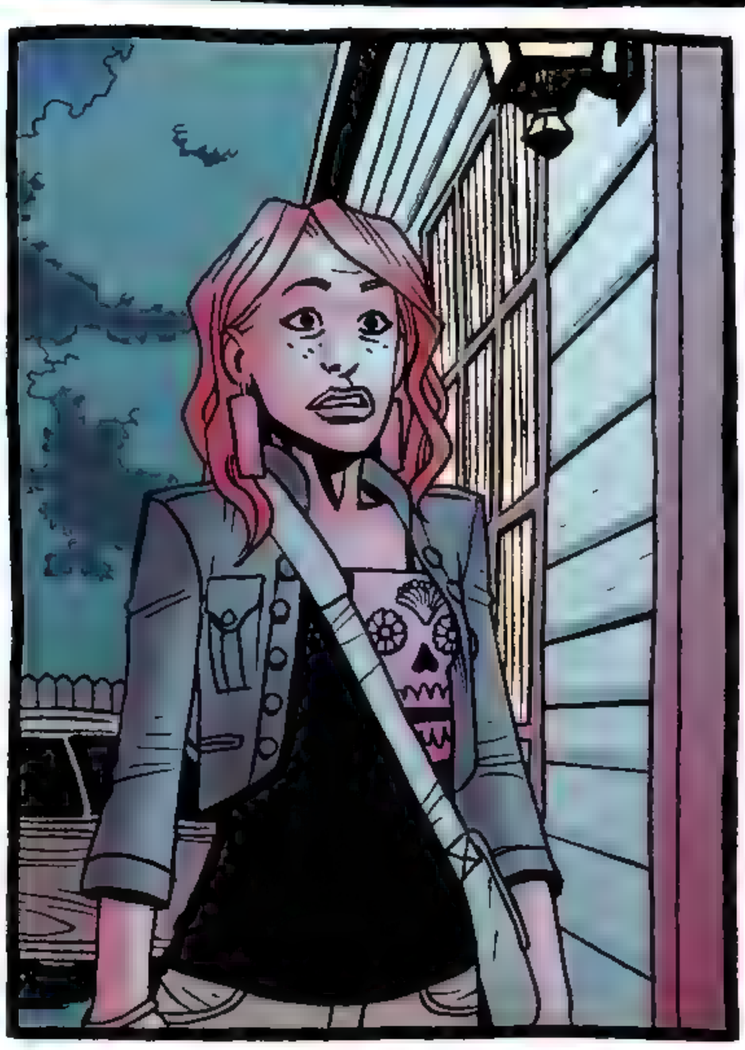
I COULD HAVE BROUGHT YOU BACK. BUT I USED IT FOR REVENGE INSTEAD.

I'M SORRY, MOM AND DAD.

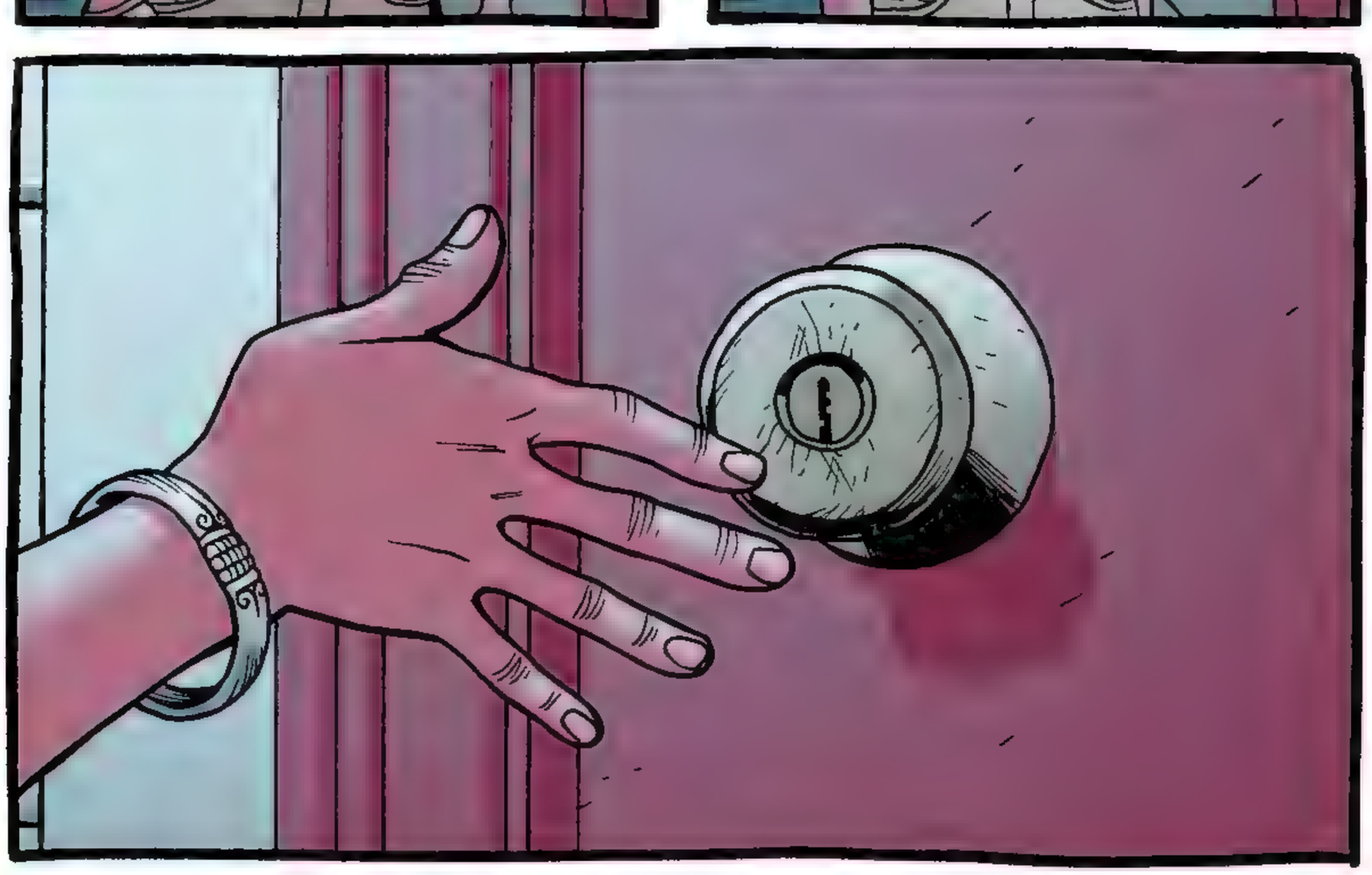
I LOVE YOU.







HOO, BOY.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY SAM!

OH... OH, GOD.

AND JUST WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, YOUNG LADY?

HAVE--HAVE YOU BEEN SITTING HERE SINCE SCHOOL ENDED?

DON'T YOU DARE TRY TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT! YOUR MOTHER AND I HAVE BEEN WORRIED SICK ABOUT YOU! THINK ABOUT *THAT* INSTEAD OF HOW LONG WE'VE BEEN SITTING HERE!

ADAM, JUST--

DON'T YOU STICK UP FOR HER! LET HER TALK FOR HERSELF! YOU COULDN'T CALL? YOU COULDN'T ASK PERMISSION TO STAY OUT LATE? YOU COULDN'T LET US KNOW YOU WERE OKAY AFTER THAT EXPLOSION AT THE MALL? *HUH?*

Happy Birthday Samantha!

DID...DID YOU EAT MY CAKE?

WHERE WERE YOU?! WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?! HOW DARE YOU?!

IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY! I THOUGHT I COULD GET AWAY WITH NOT SPENDING EVERY SECOND OF IT WITH MY STUPID FAMILY!

YOU MAY THINK WE'RE STUPID, LITTLE MISSY, BUT LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE THE ONLY FAMILY YOU'VE GOT.

NINA

SLAM!

MY FAMILY

ONLY ONE I'VE GOT...

MY FAMILY

CHAPTER THREE

Sam's
STORAGE
MONTHLY
PIZZERIA
farm fresh
4 for

YOU LITTLE JERK! GET BACK HERE!
SOMEBODY STOP HIM!

HEY!
STOP!

CRAP, HE'S--!
WHUMP!

HEH!

PLINK!

PING!

青島廣順

FWA-BADSH!

BONK!

UNF!

TSK, TSK, YOUNG MAN.

YOU SHOULD KNOW YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE LONG ARM OF JOHNNY LAW.

ALL RIGHT, I GUESS I'LL GO QUIETLY. JUST DON'T HIT ME WITH ANY MORE SPACE WEAPONS.

I'M NOT GOING TO ARREST YOU. I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU A QUESTION.

DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S BAD TO STEAL?

I KNOW IT'S NOT SO BAD THAT MY MOM STARVING WOULDN'T BE WORSE. GOTTA STEAL IF WE WANT TO *LIVE*.

HA! VERY "*ALADDIN*," ISN'T IT?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS. IS THERE ANYTHING *ELSE* YOU WANT?

YES--HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR PARENTS WOULD FEEL ABOUT YOU STEALING DINNER?

WHO DO YOU THINK SENT ME, DUMBASS?

HMPH. HAH.

HAHAHAH.

AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

REX, SON, I KNOW IT'S LIGHT AND EASY TO CARRY, BUT DO YOU THINK NEXT TIME YOU COULD GET SOMETHING A LITTLE... HEARTIER? IT *IS* CHRISTMAS.

SORRY, DAD.

NOK! NOK!

HUH? HONEY, DID YOU ORDER A...

...LARGE, BLA--

MR. SLOAN. GOOD EVENING.

MRS. SLOAN, HELLO. YOUNG REX, A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN. PLEASE, ALL OF YOU HAVE A SEAT.

MY NAME IS **RADCLIFFE.** I WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. BUT BEFORE WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME SUPPER.

STEAK!

AND IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING **ELSE**. I'M PREPARED TO MAKE YOU A VERY GENEROUS OFFER.

ENOUGH TO BUY MORE STEAK THAN YOU CAN EAT IN SEVERAL LIFETIMES.

SEVERAL?

MR. SLOAN, I ***KNOW*** THIS WASN'T THE LIFE YOU WANTED. NOT WHAT YOU MEANT TO GIVE TO YOUR FAMILY. I CAN GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER DESIRED. YOU CAN BE OUT OF THIS PLACE. OUT OF THIS LIFE, AS IF IT NEVER EXISTED. AND INTO A LIFE BEYOND YOUR WILDEST, MOST CUPIDINOUS DREAMS.

OKAY, ALL RIGHT, MISTER RADCLIFFE. BUT WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU? CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME THINK OF ANYTHING I HAVE THAT YOU MIGHT WANT.

I ASSURE YOU, MR. SLOAN, THERE IS SOMETHING...

HAH! THE BOY?

IS THAT ALL?

MR. RADCLIFFE, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A **DEAL!**

SO...IS THIS PLACE WHERE YOU *LIVE*, OR WHERE YOU *WORK?*

HAHA, REX. THIS IS WHERE I LIVE *AND* WHERE I WORK. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY...

IT'S WHERE *YOU* LIVE AND WORK, TOO.

THIS... THIS IS FOR *ME?*

YES.

AND THESE GUYS WORK FOR YOU?

YES.

AND YOU WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

HAH! IF NOT, YOUR PARENTS ARE SURE GOING TO BE MAD I LIED TO THEM!

NO...

NO, PROBABLY NOT.

"NOW, I KNOW WE'VE TRAINED FOR A LONG TIME. AND THAT'S GOOD, BECAUSE THESE THINGS TAKE TIME. YOU CAN'T SAVE AMERICA IN A DAY, MUCH LESS THE WORLD.

"AND IT'S BEEN HARD, I KNOW. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME GOOD TIMES, BUT THEY CALL IT WORK FOR A REASON.

"I'VE DONE WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU. TRIED TO MAKE YOU ***STRONGER***. MAKE YOU ***TOUGHER***.

"BUT SOME THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO ON YOUR OWN. AND I KNOW YOU CAN DO THEM.

"BECAUSE I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A FIRE IN YOU. MOXIE, GUSTO, THE EYE OF THE TIGER. WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT."

AND THAT'S WHY I KNOW, WHEN YOU COME OUT OF THAT OPERATING ROOM, YOU'LL BE STRONGER FOR IT. NOT JUST STRONGER THAN YOU WERE, BUT STRONGER THAN ANY OTHER MAN I COULD HAVE SENT IN THERE.

GOOD LUCK, SON.

I COULD TELL YOU THINGS ARE GOING SWIMMINGLY, DIRECTOR RADCLIFFE, BUT I FEAR I'D BE UNDERSELLING IT.

HMPH. EXCELLENT, EXCELLENT.

--AND IF YOU FLEX A LITTLE, I THINK YOU'LL FIND THE CHARGING PROCESS COMES NATURALLY.

YOU'LL FIND THAT YOUR CHARGE IS ONLY EFFECTIVE ON INORGANIC OBJECTS. I MEAN THAT IN THE LAYMAN'S TERM, NOT THAT YOU CAN ONLY CHARGE OBJECTS WITHOUT CARBON IN THEM. BUT I THINK YOU'LL DISCOVER THAT PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND PEOPLE ARE NOT AFFECTED BY YOUR CHARGE.

YOUR CHARGE IMBUES THESE OBJECTS WITH ENOUGH ENERGY TO MAKE THEM HIGHLY UNSTABLE. BUT! THIS IS ONLY ***POTENTIAL*** ENERGY. IT TAKES A SMALL AMOUNT OF ***KINETIC*** ENERGY AS A CATALYST--A BUMP, A DROP, A NUDGE--TO TURN ALL THAT POTENTIAL ENERGY INTO BIG BOOMS.

ALSO, THE INJECTIONS WE'VE BEEN GIVING YOU HAVE NOT ONLY INCREASED YOUR STRENGTH AND REFLEXES, BUT HAVE GONE CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO INCREASE THE DENSITY OF YOUR SKIN AND MUSCLE FIBER, MAKING YOU LARGELY RESILIENT TO YOUR OWN EXPLOSIONS.

NOW, THAT'S A LOT OF INFORMATION FOR A LITTLE BOY. IS EVERYTHING CLEA--ACK!

KRAK!

YEAH, I THINK I GOT IT.

FULLY DEBRIEFED IN HERE?

ENOUGH TALKING, I'D SAY. WHEN DO I GET TO TRY OUT THIS GARBAGE?

OH, I THINK YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE FOR A TEST RUN VERY, VERY SOON.

КВАКАДЕМИЯ

REXY BOY, YOU DID *BRILLIANTLY*. A TESTAMENT TO YOUR TRAINING AND DETERMINATION.

WHICH IS WHY I'VE GOT A *NEW* MISSION FOR YOU ALREADY. HERE'S YOUR UNDERCOVER DOCUMENTS.

PORT

"REX RADCLIFFE"?

AN INDULGENCE ON MY PART. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME.

MR. RADCLIFFE...WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING, AREN'T WE? I MEAN, WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS, RIGHT?

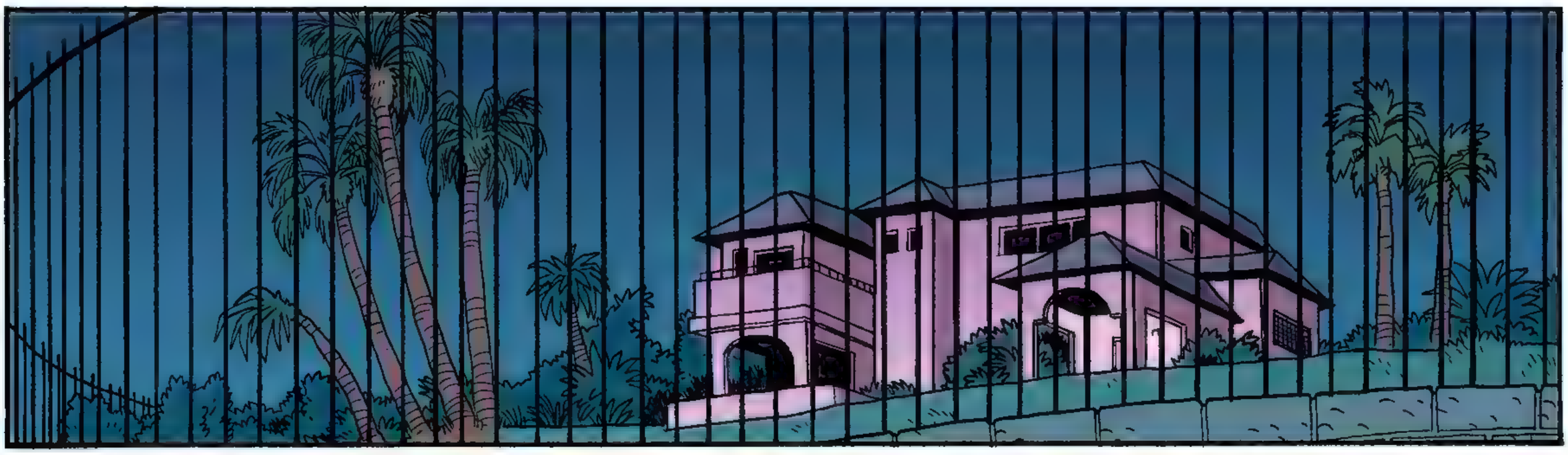
OF *COURSE* WE ARE! WHY WOULD YOU EVEN ASK?

I DON'T KNOW. I MEAN, STEALING THINGS, HURTING PEOPLE. *KILLING* PEOPLE. HOW CAN THAT BE OKAY?

REX. REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE MET? THE FIRST TIME WE TALKED? HOW YOU SAID YOUR STEALING WAS OUTWEIGHED BY YOUR FAMILY'S HUNGER.

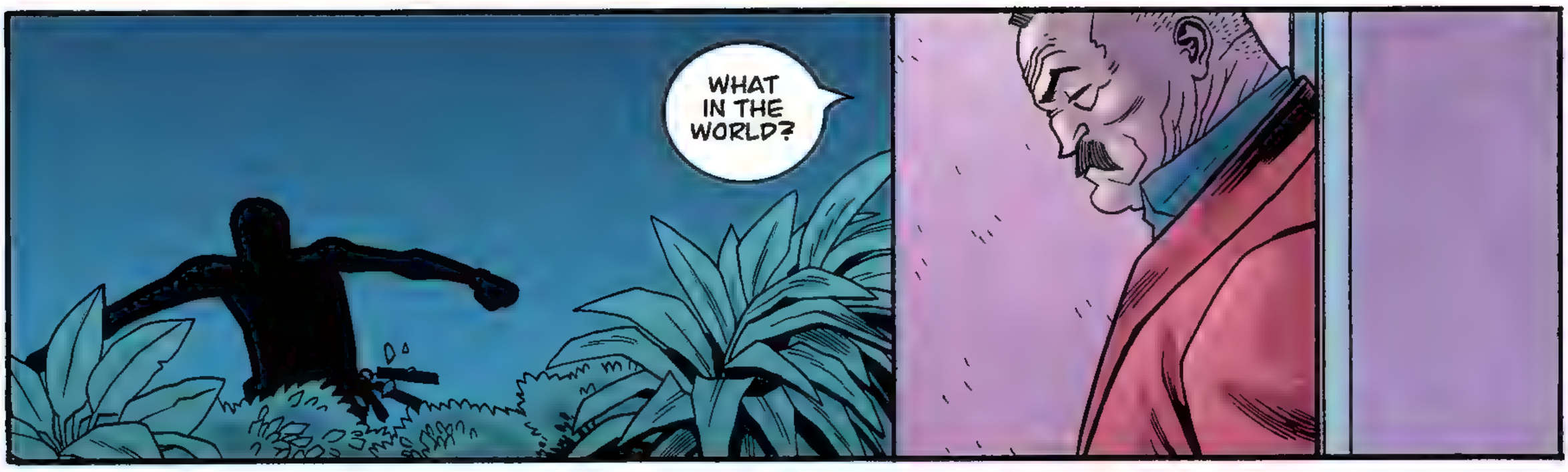
WELL-- THE WORLD IS *STARVING*, REXY BOY.

AND THESE PEOPLE ARE JUST CUP NOODLES.



URGENT

DING DONG!


WHAT IN THE WORLD?

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THE POST OFFICE DELIVERED THIS LATE.

NOVELTY BASEBALL?

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH A GLOWING BASEBALL? I DON'T EVEN LIKE BASEB--

КРАКОВАДОМ!

HEH.

HEH.

REX, YOU'VE DONE SUCH A *FANTASTIC* JOB ON THESE MISSIONS, I WANTED TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING SPECIAL.

SOMETHING *SPECIAL?* YOU'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THAT BEFORE.

WELL, IT'S NOT JUST FOR THE MISSIONS. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, REXY BOY.

OH MY GOD!

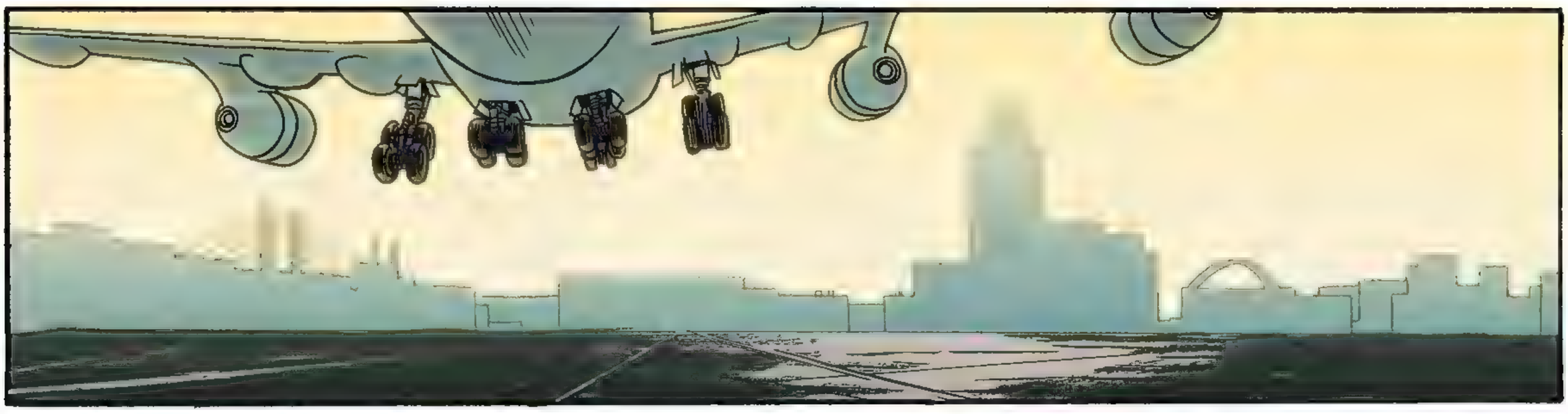
THIS IS *AWESOME!*

AND FOR MY BIRTHDAY?! MY DAD NEVER EVEN *REMEMBERED* MY BIRTHDAY!

REX...

YOUR FATHER WAS A MAN WHO SOLD HIS SON FOR A STEAK DINNER.

BELIEVE ME, REXY BOY. YOU'RE WHERE YOU BELONG.

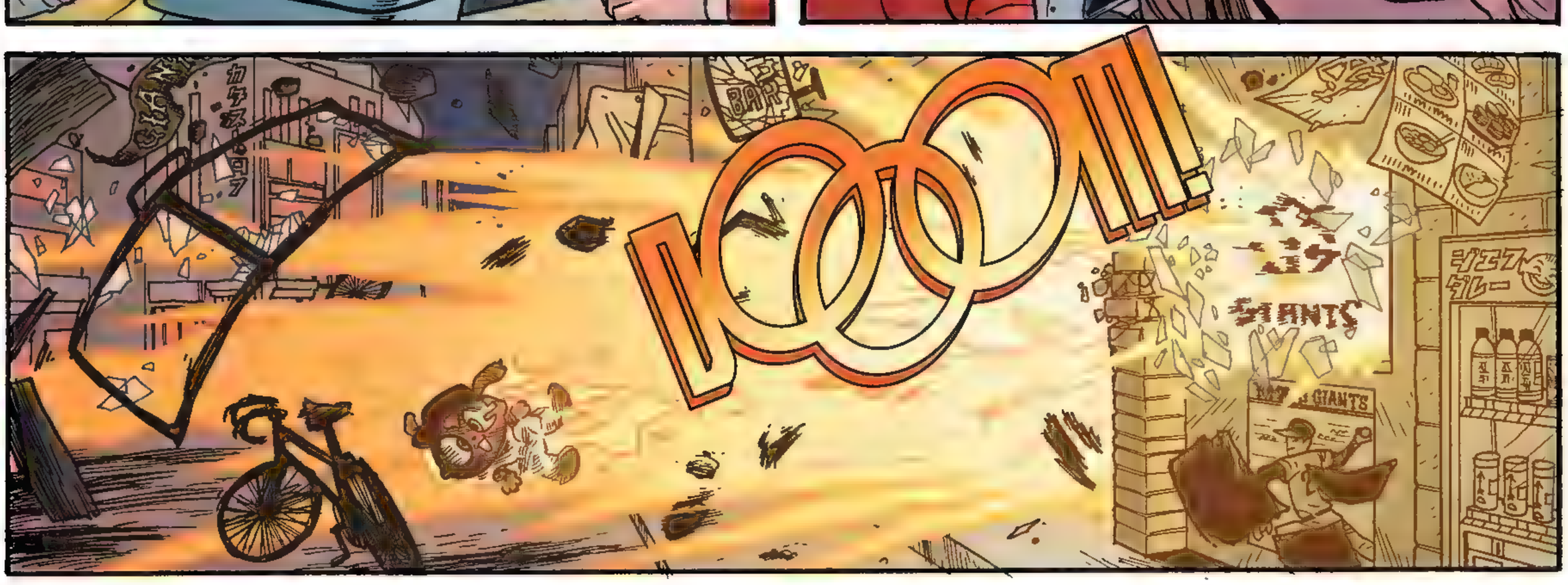


WELCOME TO JAPAN, MR. RADCLIFFE! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I HAVE A QUICK LOOK THROUGH YOUR BAG!
EASTPAK
&DOWN

NOT AT ALL. GO RIGHT AHEAD.
OH! ARE YOU A BIG SPORTS FAN, MISTER RADCLIFFE?
DARE MASTER

OH, YES. I SUPPORT THE HANSHIN TIGERS.
OH! YOU SHOULD BE VERY CAREFUL WHERE YOU SAY THAT! SOME VERY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE SUPPORT THE YOMIURI GIANTS!
DARE MASTER

I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.


BOOM!!!
BAR
GIANTS

SPLOGG!

CHOOM!

BOOM!

WHOKK!

HURRY! GET MR. STAGG INTO THE ELEVATOR!

KRAKK!

SPUTT!

SHUKK!

KRAKK!

CHOOM!

ELEVATOR-- EXCELLENT CHOICE.

JUST BRILLIANT.

OH, REXY BABY. NOTHING'S GOING TO STOP US NOW.

RRR-KOOM!

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

I'M NOT USUALLY ONE TO JOKE ABOUT BLACK OPS, REX.

YEAH, BUT THE PENTAGON? I'M PRETTY SURE THEY KEEP GOVERNMENT THERE. I THOUGHT WE WERE GOVERNMENT.

LET ME ASSURE YOU, REX, THAT WHILE THIS GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY WAS ONCE FULLY ON THE SIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THESE UNITED STATES--I USED TO RUN IT, IN FACT--THE CURRENT DIRECTOR, MY FORMER PROTEGE, HAS GONE QUITE...ROGUE. COMPLETELY OVER THE BEND.

HE NEEDS STOPPING.

OKAY, I BELIEVE YOU. BUT,THIS DOESN'T HAVE HIS NAME, JUST AN ADDRESS. HOW CAN I TARGET SOMEONE I CAN'T RECOGNIZE?

OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, REX. EVEN THOUGH THE DIRECTOR IS THE TARGET--

--I WANT YOU TO TAKE OUT THE WHOLE DAMN PLACE.

NOW, REST UP, REXY BOY. IT'S A BIG MISSION TOMORROW.

THE PENTAGON?

THE GOOD GUYS BLOW UP THE PENTAGON NOW?

LANGALANGALAN

WHAT THE HELL?

TAE KWON DO ★

HOT COFFI

ALANGALANGLANGALANGALANGALANGALAN

G. BANK

HOLY CRAP!!

BA-BOOOSH!

...NOTHING...

CAN KILL...

THE CANNON....

DUDE, ARE YOU OKAY?

HEY!

WHOA!

WHOA!

YOU'RE GOING TO HIT ME WITH A ROCK?

THAT'S NO WAY TO TREAT A LADY-- ESPECIALLY ONE *THIS* CUTE.

NGLY

CHAPTER FOUR

OKAY, WAIT! UM...

HOT COFFEE

SHOP-E-MA

WE SELL FOOD

THAT GUY--HE WAS ROBBING THE BANK, *RIGHT?*

GOT IT IN ONE, NANCY DREW.

SO HE'S A *VILLAIN.* A *SUPER-VILLAIN.*

LUCKY

YEEEAH.

TOTALLY DID.

AND YOU STOPPED HIM. WITH *SUPER POWERS.*

YOU'RE A *SUPERHERO.*

TOTALLY AM. *ATOM EVE* AT YOUR SERVICE, CITIZEN.

OH MY GOD. OKAY, YEAH. OH MY GOD. I THINK I NEED YOUR HELP.

WHAT? *REALLY?* WITH *WHAT?*

OKAY, WELL-- LET ME JUST--

KILL YOU!

FWOOSH

LOOK OUT!

ULP!

FWOMP!

DUDE, RUN! GET TO SAFETY!

MAN, ARE YOU EVEN SERIOUS?

I'VE GOT A FRONT ROW SEAT TO AWESOME HERE!

I'M SICK OF THIS! I'M TAKING YOU OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL!

COME ON, KILLCANNON, CLEARLY THE CANNON THING ISN'T WORKING OUT FOR YOU. YOU COULD BE KILLMACHETE. OR, OOH! KILLCATAPULT!

KRAKKAM!

GRAH!

THAT WAS JUST A PEBBLE. YOU SHOULD SEE THE WHOLE BRICK.

I'LL KILL YOU, TOO!

OOF!

FUDD!

KHOOM!

GOTCHA!

IF YOU THINK THIS THING WAS EXPLOSIVE BEFORE--!

--JUST YOU WAIT!

KRAKO-BO-GOOM!

THUD!

YIKES. THIS DUDE JUST TOTALLY VOMITED ALL OVER HIMSELF.

BOOYAH!

GREAT WOR--!

WHOA-- I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE THAT.

GROSS.

NOW. YOU SAID YOU NEEDED MY HELP. ARE YOU ***SURE?*** IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DO PRETTY WELL HANDLING YOURSELF... STRANGER.

HUH? OH! OH YEAH.

I GUESS I DON'T NEED THIS ANYMORE.

MY NAME IS REX. REX SLOAN. I NEED SOME ADVICE.

GOOD TO MEET YOU, REX SLOAN. TELL ME HOW I CAN HELP.

OKAY, SO, THERE'S THIS GUY. HE'S KIND OF LIKE MY BOSS, KIND OF LIKE MY DAD... *UGH*. HE'S THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THESE POWERS. TOLD ME HE'D HELP ME USE THEM FOR GOOD. TOLD ME HE WORKED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

BUT I'M WORRIED THAT... WELL, THAT MAYBE HE'S A BAD GUY. SOME OF THE MISSIONS HE'S SENT ME ON...THEY JUST DON'T FEEL RIGHT. I THOUGHT I WAS A GOVERNMENT AGENT, BUT MY NEXT MISSION IS ELIMINATING A TARGET INSIDE ***THE PENTAGON***-- GOD, I THINK I MIGHT BE A HITMAN. WHICH ISN'T NEARLY AS COOL AS IT SOUNDS.

BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY GOVERNMENT PEOPLE AND BAD PEOPLE AREN'T MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. BUT, YOU KILL PEOPLE... FOR MONEY? YOU'RE A BAD GUY? IS ***THAT*** WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?

NO--NOT AT ALL. I'M A GOOD GUY TRICKED INTO DOING BAD THINGS--I THINK. IF I DO THIS MISSION, I MIGHT HURT AN INNOCENT PERSON. IF I DON'T, AND HE'S EVIL, WHAT IF HE HURTS ME? THE PENTAGON--

THAT'S JUST A HUGE RED FLAG TO ME, SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT...

...AND I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PLACE TO ***GO!*** I LIVE WITH THIS GUY IN HIS GIANT DEATH FACTORY! I JUST... NEED A PLACE TO THINK, YOU KNOW?

WELL, I'VE GOT A--A, UH, JEEZ.

I'VE GOT A PLACE... I GUESS.

WHAT? ***REALLY?***

WELL, OKAY, IT'S KIND OF MY PARENTS' HOUSE...

TO BE HONEST.

HAH! AND YOU WANT TO SNEAK A STRANGE BOY--A DANGEROUS ONE LIKE ME, EVEN-- INTO YOUR BEDROOM? WON'T THEY BE ***PISSED*** IF THEY CATCH US?

HEH... YEAH. I IMAGINE THEY REALLY, ***REALLY*** WOULD. THIS IS GETTING BETTER BY THE MINUTE. WE BETTER GET A MOVE ON, THEN.

YOU'RE MY KIND OF GIRL, RED. ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THIS?

TOTALLY. LET'S JUST TAKE CARE OF THIS GUY FIRST.

HEY-- YOU TOTALLY TOOK THIS GUY DOWN. HE'S OUT COLD. ARE YOU SURE ***YOU'RE*** NOT A SUPERHERO?

HONESTLY...

I USED TO THINK I ***WAS.***

THE SUBURBAN HOME OF SAMANTHA EVE WILKINS AND HER FAMILY.

YEAH, I MEAN, I'M PRETTY SURE THEY KNOW I'M A SUPERHERO BY NOW. BUT MOSTLY I TRY TO KEEP THEM FROM BRINGING IT UP, YOU KNOW? STUFF IS AWKWARD ENOUGH WITH THEM.

I MEAN, PARENTS, RIGHT? CRAZY.

UH, YEAH. I GUESS I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

LOOK, WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AND GET DRESSED FOR BED.

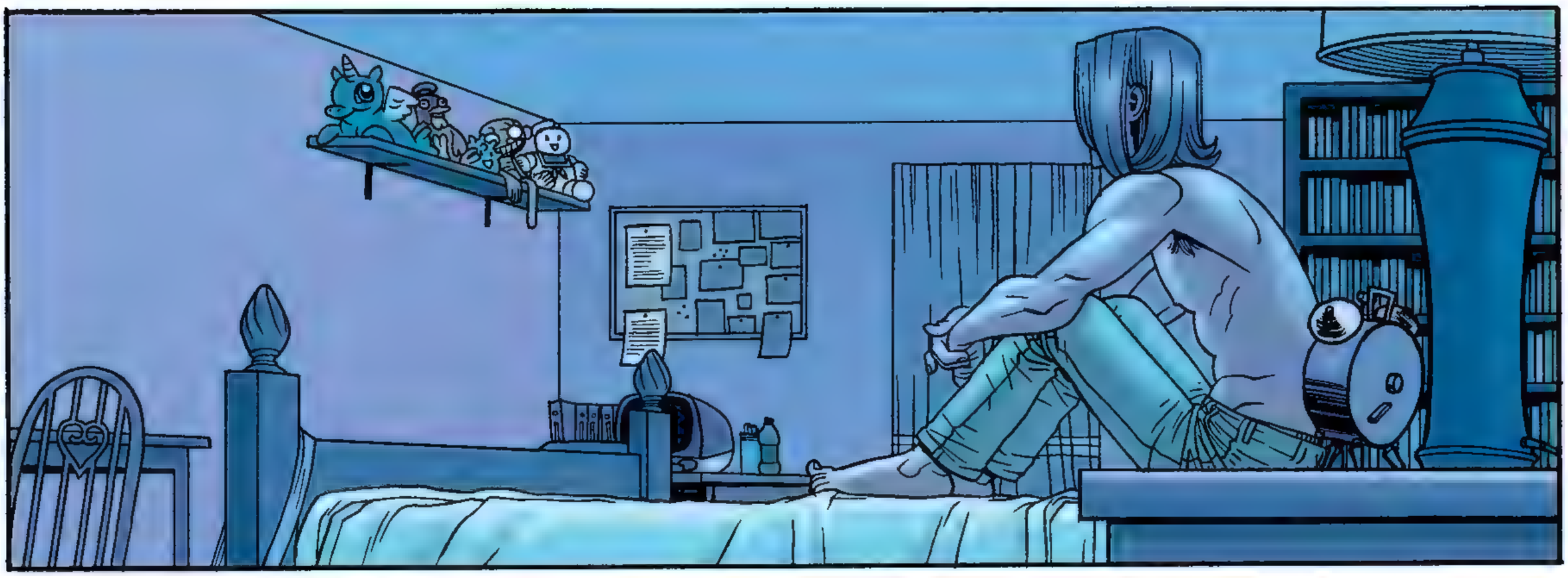
I'M TOTALLY COOL WITH YOU SLEEPING HERE WHILE YOU WORK THINGS OUT--I JUST CAN'T BE STAYING UP ALL NIGHT, Y'KNOW? I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO TOMORROW. THINGS CALLED SCHOOL.

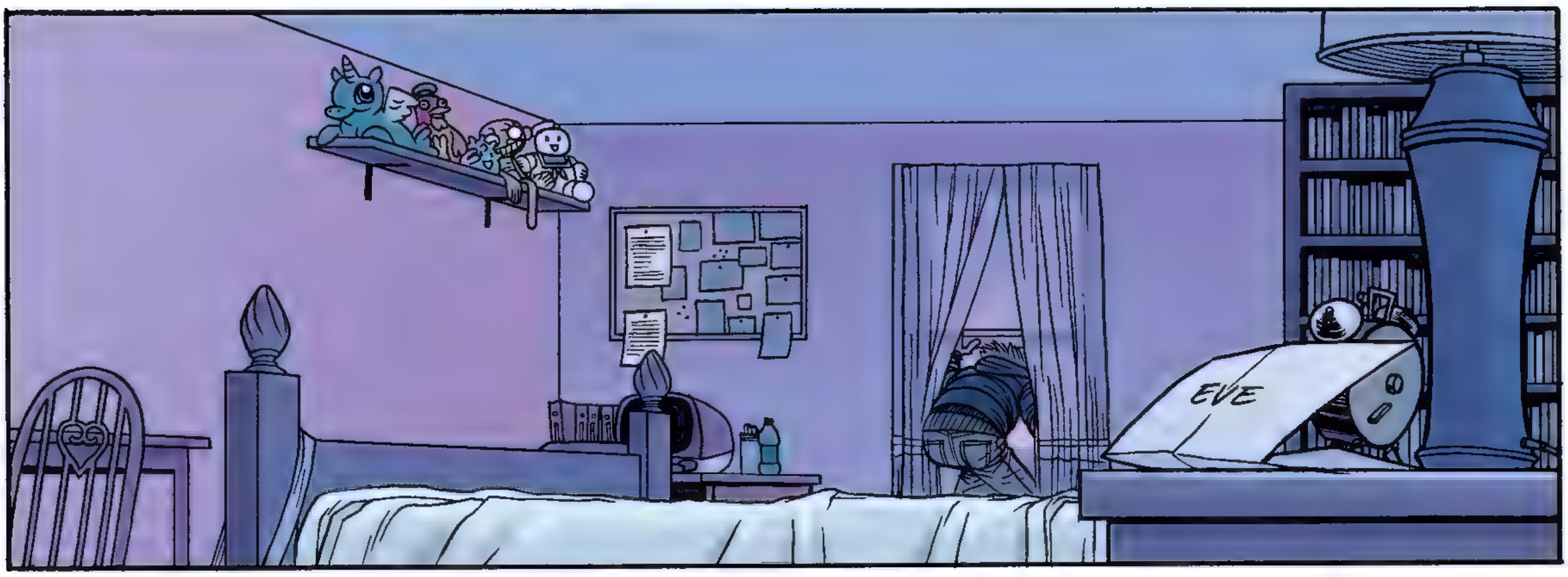
PROBABLY NOT A BAD IDEA FOR YOU TO GET SOME SLEEP, EITHER. I HATE TO SAY IT, YOU KNOW, BUT YOU'VE GOT A BIG DECISION AHEAD OF YOU TOMORROW. MAYBE THE BIGGEST OF YOUR LIFE.

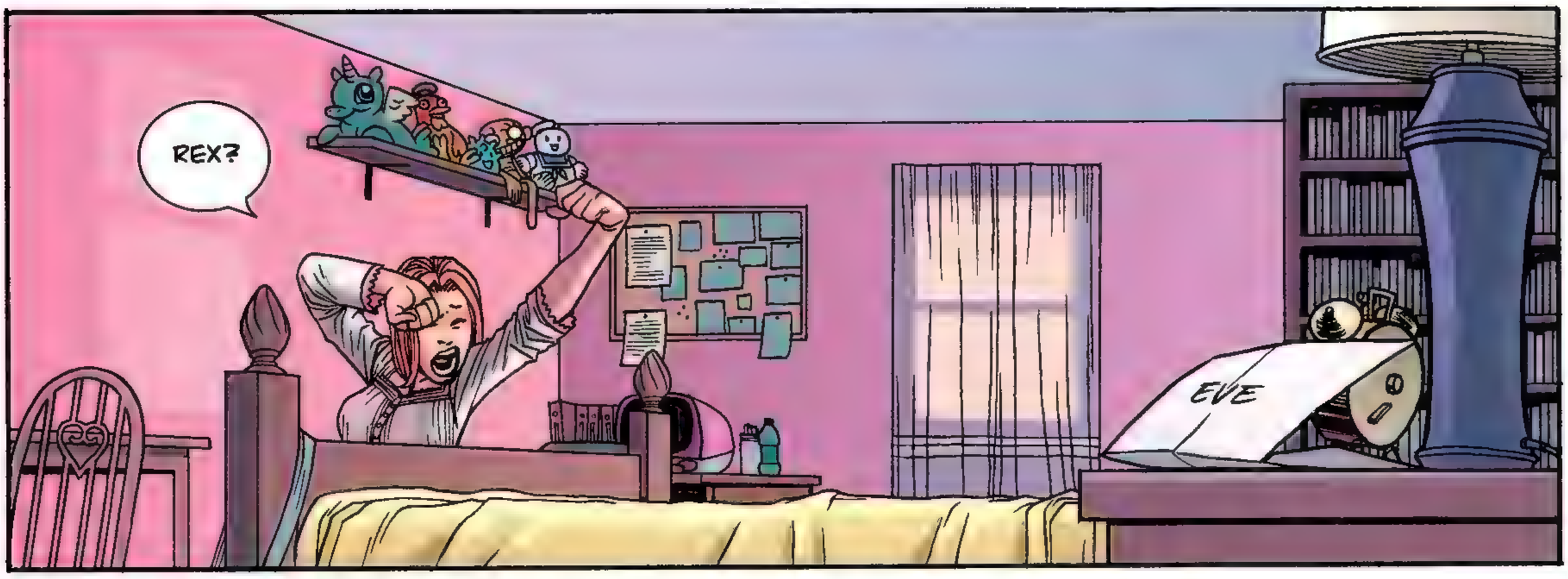
HOPPER

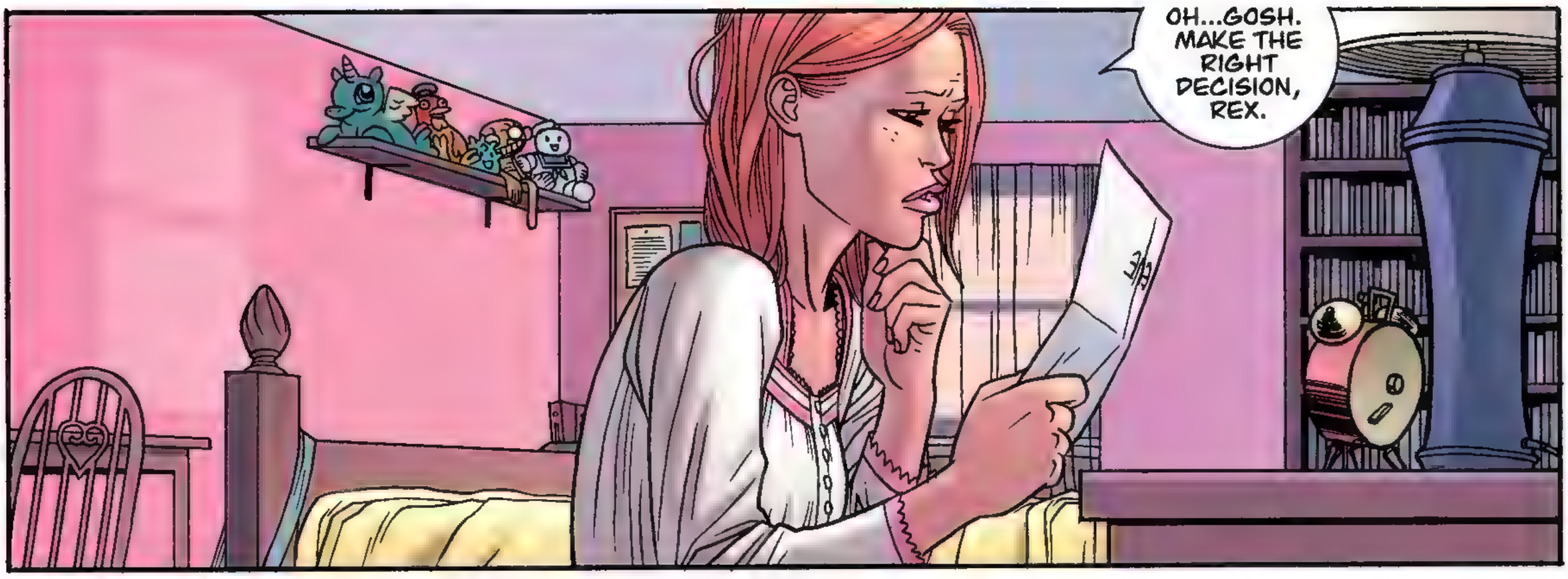
WORLD HISTORY
ECONOMICS
BIOLOGY

YEAH. PRETTY BIG.




EVE


REX?
EVE


OH...GOSH. MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION, REX.

THE PENTAGON, HOME OF THE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY.

UNITED STATES PENTAGON

Parking In Rear

THE PENTAGON

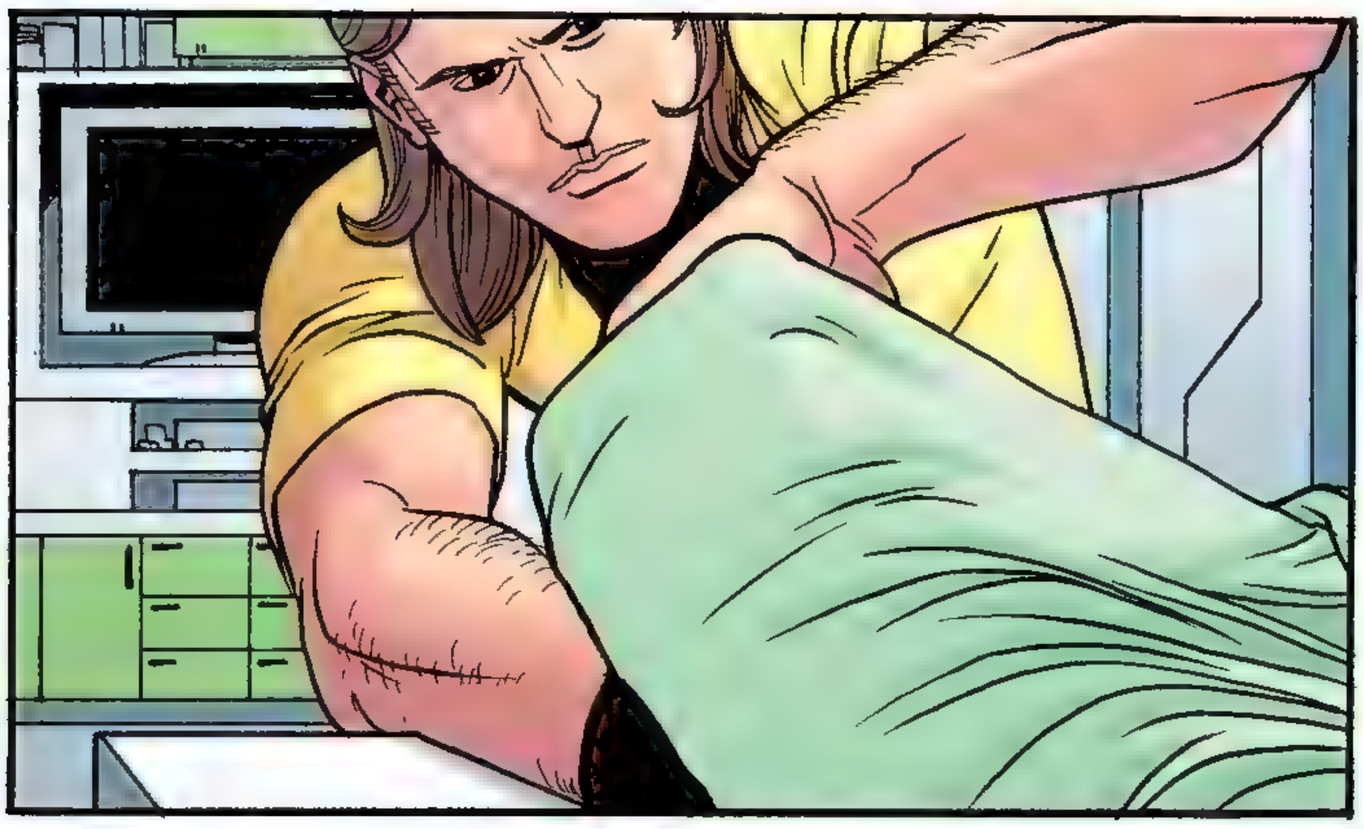
SCANGRADE

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE BUT I JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE.

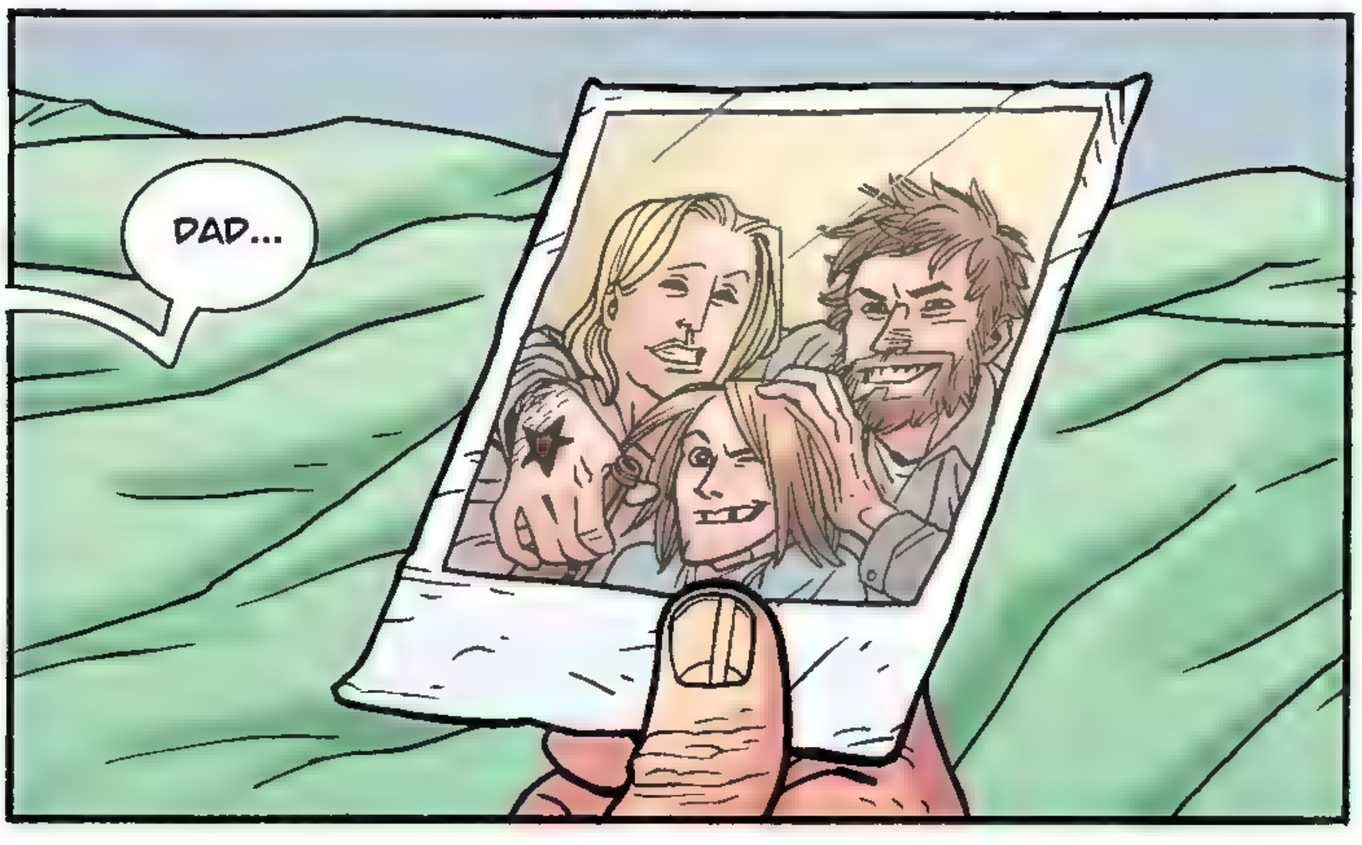
AFTERNOON.
FFE WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU IN HIS
ROOM... YOU WERE A GOOD ROOM.

BEST ROOM I'VE EVER HAD. BEST ROOM I'M LIKELY TO HAVE FOR A WHILE.

NOT AS GOOD AS EVE'S ROOM.



YOU SON OF A BITCH.


DAD...

MAN... I NEVER REALLY STOPPED TO LOOK AT THESE...

WAIT...

NO. OH, NO. YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME.

REX!

GOOD MORNING, MR. RADCLIFFE. WHAT'S THIS PICTURE?

WHAT, THIS? THAT'S JUST ME AND SOME SOLDIERS WHO DID SOME SPECIAL OPS WITH ME BACK IN THE EIGHTIES.

WHY? WERE YOU *EXPECTING* ONE?

I DARE SAY A DEADLY EXPLOSION AT *THE PENTAGON* WOULD WARRANT SOME COVERAGE.

YEAH, OKAY, BUT IS THIS GUY MY--

REX. I'M SAD TO SAY I HAVEN'T HEARD ANY SPECIAL EMERGENCY BULLETINS ON THE NEWS TODAY.

WELL... MAYBE THEY'RE COVERING IT UP.

COVERING IT UP?

COVERING IT UP?!

WRAMM!

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME, REX?

ME?! YOU'RE A LIAR!

I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING!

A HOME! FOOD! A JOB! MONEY!

STOP THIS! YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO HURT ME! YOU MADE *SURE* OF THAT!

HAH! AND THAT'S THE OTHER THING I GAVE YOU! THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!

POWER!

I GAVE YOU POWER, AND I ONLY ASKED FOR ONE THING-- LOYALTY! BLIND, UNWAVERING *LOYALTY!* THAT'S NOT SO MUCH, YOU CHILD!

AND WHAT DO I GET? A SLAP IN THE FACE? YOU'RE GOING TO STRANGLE ME?! ALL THESE YEARS, AND YOU'RE JUST AN UNGRATEFUL JACKA--!

IRK!

S-- STOP...

III.

WHAT... WHAT HAVE YOU...

WAIT! NO, DON'T *TOUCH--*

TKK.

SPAGK!!

NO...

WHUMP!

I DIDN'T MEAN...I DIDN'T MEAN IT!

OH, GOD, I'M SO SORRY.

UNNH!

HOOM!!

CHK.

HMM?

EVE? CAN I COME IN?

GOD, REX! YES! GET IN HERE BEFORE MY PARENTS SEE YOU!

I MESSED UP, EVE. I REALLY MESSED UP.

GOD, WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE A *WRECK!*

DUARTE

I WENT TO TELL HIM I WAS LEAVING, AND... I--I DIDN'T MEAN TO. HE TRIED TO KILL ME, AND IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT.*

...OH. OH, GOD.

AN--AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING. I *PANICKED.* I WANTED TO RUN, TO JUST GET OUT OF THERE, BUT... I WAS AFRAID.

I BLEW UP THE HOUSE.

THE WHOLE HOUSE? THE WHOLE FACILITY?

WHAT? I DON'T KNOW-- MOST OF IT?

OKAY, WE HAVE TO ASSUME YOU DIDN'T BLOW UP THE WHOLE PLACE, AND THAT'S BAD.

WHY? I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

YOU SAID THIS RADCLIFFE HAD A WHOLE FACILITY FULL OF RESEARCH ON DEVELOPING SUPER-SOLDIERS. NOTES, AUTOMATED SCIENTISTS, HARD DRIVES FULL OF THE STUFF. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, THE WHOLE THING.

YEAH, SO?

WHO DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO INVESTIGATE AN EXPLOSION AT THE HOUSE OF A MAN LIKE RADCLIFFE? WHO DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO HARVEST THAT LEFTOVER RESEARCH?

I DON'T KNOW! THE GOVERNMENT?

YES! GOD!

SO WHAT? THIS IS GOOD NEWS, RIGHT? I THOUGHT IT BELONGED TO THE GOVERNMENT ALL ALONG, AND NOW THEY'LL REALLY HAVE IT! I MEAN, SO WHAT? WHAT'S SO TERRIBLE?

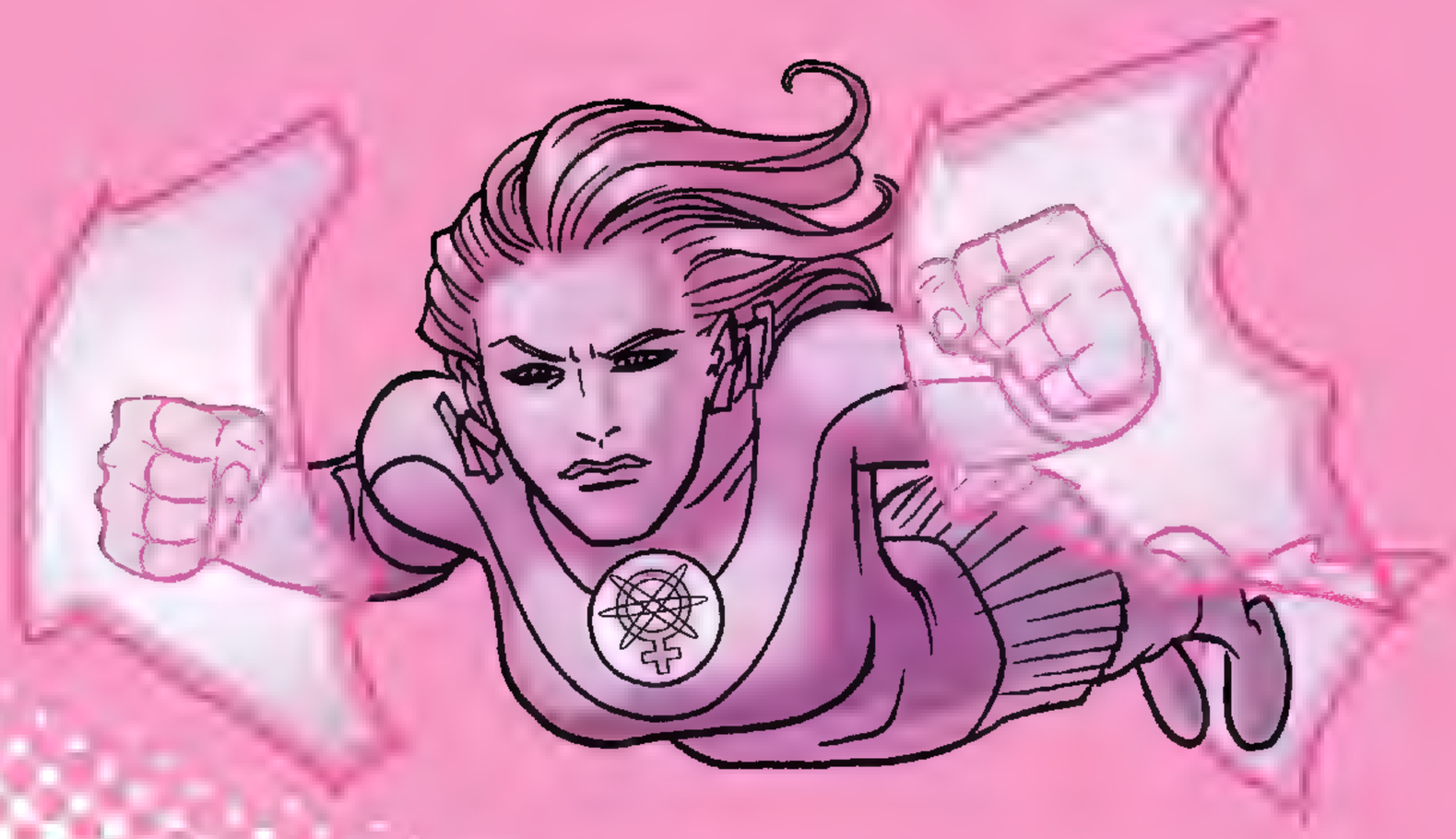
THERE ARE BAD MEN WORKING IN THE GOVERNMENT-- I KNOW--I'VE DEALT WITH THEM. OH, GOD, REX. YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

JUST AS YOU EXPECTED, IT SEEMS AS IF ALL THE AUTOMATONS AND CYBORGS WERE COMPLETELY DEACTIVATED AND THEIR HARD DRIVES WIPED UPON THE TERMINATION OF THE DECEASED INSIDE.

AND THE DNA SCANS? IS THE CORPSE WHO WE THINK IT IS?

PRELIMINARY SCANS SEEM TO INDICATE THAT IT'S RADCLIFFE, JUST AS YOU THOUGHT, MISTER ERICKSON.

OUTSTANDING.



CHAPTER FIVE

88

ABOUT LIKE I EXPECTED. THEY BEAT US TO IT.

AW, IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD, I'M SURE. THIS IS NOTHING I HAVEN'T DONE BEFORE A *MILLION* TIMES.

YEAH, IT'S ONLY LIKE A DOZEN GUYS. NO BIG.

CHECK FOR YOURSELF.

WHAT--?! ***NO!***

WHAT? WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

REMEMBER WHEN I SAID THAT IT MIGHT BE MUCH WORSE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FIND THIS STUFF THAN FOR RADCLIFFE TO HAVE KEPT IT?

UH, SURE, YEAH.

THAT IS THE GUY I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHEN I SAID THAT.

LOOK, IF HE SEES YOU, YOUR LIFE IS RUINED--

--YOU NEED A *COSTUME.*

HOLY--! IF YOU WANTED IN MY PANTS, YOU SHOULDA JUST SAID!

REX, I'M *SERIOUS!* BE STEALTHY ABOUT THIS!

LOOK, I TOLD YOU. I'VE DONE THIS A MILLION TIMES.

BOOM!

WHAT?

WHAT IN THE NAME OF HELL WAS *THAT?*

GET OUT THERE AND FIND WHO DID THAT, *ALL OF YOU!*

CHK. CHK. CHK. CHK.

USA

RODGERS, I'M GOING TO NEED MY SIDEARM.

WAIT.

CHOOM! GOOM!

SUPER-HEROES.

GET ME MY *BIG* SIDEARM.

BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!

IF IT'S WEARING A COSTUME, MAKE IT BLEED!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HAH!

USA

SPAK! SPAK! SPAK!

HOLY HECK!

WHOOP!

I'LL DRAW THEIR FIRE! YOU JUST GO AND FINISH THIS OFF!

CHECK!

NNGH!

OOOFA!

KOOOM!!

MAN...

THAT WAS YOUR OWN FAULT, DUDE.

AW, DAMMIT.

KABOOM!!!

EVE!

I SWEAR I TOTALLY HAD THIS UNDER CONTROL.

REALLY? THAT WASN'T YOU JUST YELLING FOR HELP?

...NEVERMIND.

GAH! RUN! FALL BACK!

OKAY-- =HUFF= UGH. THERE'S A, THERE'S A THING UNDERGROUND HERE. METER'S NEARBY... UGH.

HEY, THAT BUBBLE YOU MADE BEFORE... CAN YOU MAKE, LIKE, A BIG--?

SLOW DOWN!

ALMOST THERE!

YEAH, I'M ON IT. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

THEY FOUND US...

SPAK!

OKAY, HERE'S THE PROBLEM. I NEED TO DESTROY THE WHOLE FACILITY, BUT I CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO CHARGE THE ACTUAL BUILDING. THESE TROOPS ARE MAKING SURE OF THAT.

THEY'LL ONLY LET ME GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO CHUCK BOMBS TOWARD THE BUILDING, WHICH CAN ONLY BLOW UP A FEW SQUARE YARDS AT A TIME. NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

I CAN'T CHARGE THE FACILITY FROM THIS FAR AWAY, BUT I CAN CHARGE A LENGTH OF MATERIAL AS LONG AS IT'S TOUCHING, RIGHT?

SPAK!

NOW, THERE SHOULD BE A GAS MAIN RUNNING RIGHT BELOW US--

SPAK!

HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW THIS WILL WORK?

I TOLD YOU. I'VE DONE THIS A MILLION TIMES. I JUST NEED TO BE able TO DIG DOWN--

SPAK!

STEP BACK AND LEAVE THAT PART TO ME.

NICE...

HUP!

VERY NICE.

KLIK! KLAK!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, SON.

SEE THIS HERE BIG GUN?

I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO DO THAT.

SORRY... DIGGING THAT HOLE BROKE MY CONCENTRATION, ONLY DROPPED THE FORCE FIELD FOR A SECOND...

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SON?

UH... REX...

SPLODE.

YEAH! REX SPLODE.

I'M SORRY, LITTLE GIRL. DO I ***KNOW*** YOU? DID I INVITE YOU TO TALK? ***MEN*** ARE TALKING NOW. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN THE TEA PARTY STARTS.

NOW, REX, AS I WAS SAYING. MY NAME IS ERICKSON. STEVEN ERICKSON. I WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. PERHAPS YOU'VE ***HEARD*** OF US. WE OWN THIS BUILDING YOU'RE TRYING TO DESTROY.

NOW, NORMALLY, WE SEND PEOPLE WHO TRY TO DESTROY GOVERNMENT PROPERTY TO PRISON, WHERE WE SECRETLY KILL THEM. BUT YOU, YOUNG MAN, POSSESS A TALENT THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO US. JOIN OUR LITTLE FAMILY, AND I THINK WE CAN OVERLOOK ANY... PAST INDISCRETIONS.

A FAMILY, HUH? SO YOU'D BE, LIKE, WHAT? MY *DAD*?

HAH...SURE, IF YOU WANT TO LOOK AT IT THAT WAY.

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, G-MAN! I'VE HAD TWO DADS SO FAR, AND THEY ***BOTH*** SUCKED! SO YOU, YOUR MOM, AND BIG BROTHER CAN ALL GO SCREW!

I DON'T NEED YOU!

ALL I NEED IS MY GIRLFRIEND!

NO! THE GAS MAIN!

THUKK!

BA-BOOM-CHOOOOOOOM

NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

QUICK, YOU IDIOTS! SALVAGE ANYTHING YOU CAN!

COME ON. LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE BEFORE THEY NOTICE WE'RE GONE.

Shoppe

TAILOR
Shoppe
CUSTOMIZATIONS & ALTERATIONS FOR Ladies & Gentlemen

HEY, I TELL YOU, THIS WAS REALLY NICE OF YOU TO HELP US OUT LIKE THIS, MR. TAYLOR.

HAH. REMEMBER, REX. TAILOR IS MY JOB, NOT MY NAME. NAME'S ART ROSENBAUM. YOU CAN CALL ME ART.

AND BESIDES, WHEN I SAW A COUPLE OF YOUNG HEROES LIKE YOURSELVES RUNNING THROUGH THE STREETS IN TATTERED RAGS, IT JUST BROKE MY HEART.

I STILL WISH YOU HAD LISTENED TO ME ON THE PANTS LEG, THOUGH. A BIG "REX SPLODE" RIGHT DOWN THE LEG WOULD HAVE JUST BEEN... LIKE, AMAZING.

IT WAS A LITTLE BUSY, REX. NOT TO MENTION *GAUDY*. VERY '90S.

IT WAS *ICONIC*.

YOU KIDS.

That's some strong stitch, you bet!

BEHOLD, THE MAN.

YES. I AM THE MAN.

MAN, NO OFFENSE, EVE, BUT THIS IS WAY BETTER THAN THAT PIECE OF CRAP YOU WHIPPED UP FOR ME.

WELL, YOU KNOW, HE IS A PROFESSIONAL AT THIS, REX...

WHICH REMINDS ME... WE CAN, UH, WORK OUT A PAYMENT PLAN, RIGHT?

DON'T WORRY, HON. WE'LL GET YOU THE FIRST-TIMER DISCOUNT.

OR, YOU KNOW, WE COULD EVEN WORK OUT A TWO-FOR-ONE?

SERIOUSLY, EVE, IF HE CAN MAKE YOUR COSTUME AS MUCH BETTER AS HE MADE MINE, LOOK OUT!

NO, THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'VE GOT IT HANDLED.

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP, MR. ROSENBAUM. WE'LL BE IN TOUCH, I'M SURE.

NICE ALTERATIONS.

VERY NICE.

EVE? HEY, WHAT THE HELL?

EXIT

YEAH, SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO STORM OUT LIKE THAT. IT'S JUST—SEEING ERICKSON LIKE THAT REALLY MESSED ME UP.

Jester P.O.A.

YEAH, WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT? I MEAN, YEAH, THAT GUY WAS A JERK, BUT WHAT'S YOUR BEEF WITH HIM?

HE KILLED MY PARENTS, REX.

WHAAAAAT? I'VE MET YOUR--

FIRST OF ALL, YOU'VE HIDDEN FROM MY PARENTS. NOT THE SAME THING. AND THOSE ARE MY *ADOPTIVE* PARENTS. THEY DON'T KNOW THAT, THOUGH. THEY THINK THEY'RE REAL.

MY REAL PARENTS WERE PART OF A GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENT DESIGNED TO MAKE A SUPER-WEAPON. AND, HEY, HERE I AM. AND ONCE ERICKSON THOUGHT HE HAD ME, HE "*DISPOSED*" OF MY REAL MOM AND DAD.

SO, OKAY, WHY DIDN'T HE RECOGNIZE YOU?

IT'S POSSIBLE I USED MY POWERS TO ERASE HIS MEMORY AND ALL VIDEO EVIDENCE OF MY EVER HAVING BEEN IN HIS FACILITIES.

WHAAAT? WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THAT TO HIM AGAIN?

IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT! IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT!*

MAN, I DON'T THINK I GET YOUR POWERS AT ALL.

IT'S LIKE, PINK SHAPES THAT DO STUFF-- RIGHT? YOU MAKE PINK STUFF WITH YOUR THOUGHTS.

SO YOUR LIFE WAS RUINED BECAUSE SOME GOVERNMENT GUY WANTED A SUPERMAN TO BEAT UP SOME OTHER GOVERNMENT GUY'S SUPERMAN, HUH?

PRETTY MUCH.

YEAH. I CAN RELATE. CAN WE GO HOME NOW?

BACK TO MY PLACE?

WHERE ELSE?

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A THING ABOUT DADS, HUH?

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE ME. YOUR DAD WOULD HATE ME.

YEAH. I THINK THAT'S WHY I LIKE YOU SO MUCH.

HEY, DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN FIND OUT WHERE PEOPLE LIVE AND STUFF ON THE INTERNET?

IS IT STEAK?

I DID KNOW THAT. I BROUGHT YOU SOME DINNER.

YEAH, IT'S STEAK.

MAN, THIS IS AWESOME. HOW DO YOU GET STEAK FOR ME EVERY NIGHT?

YOU KNOW. I JUST WHIP IT UP.

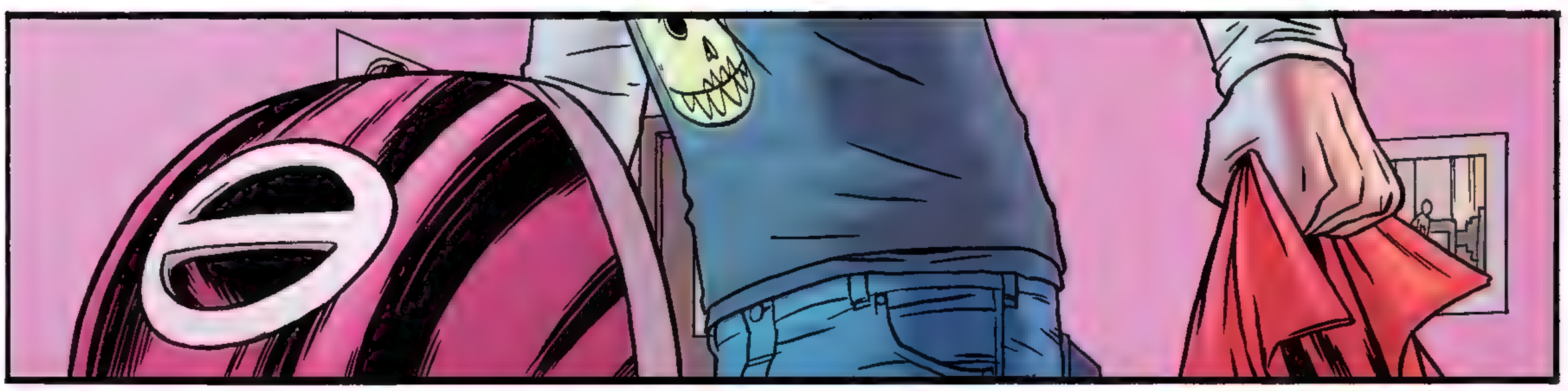
SO, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TONIGHT? BUST SOME HEADS? THAT'S ALWAYS FUN.

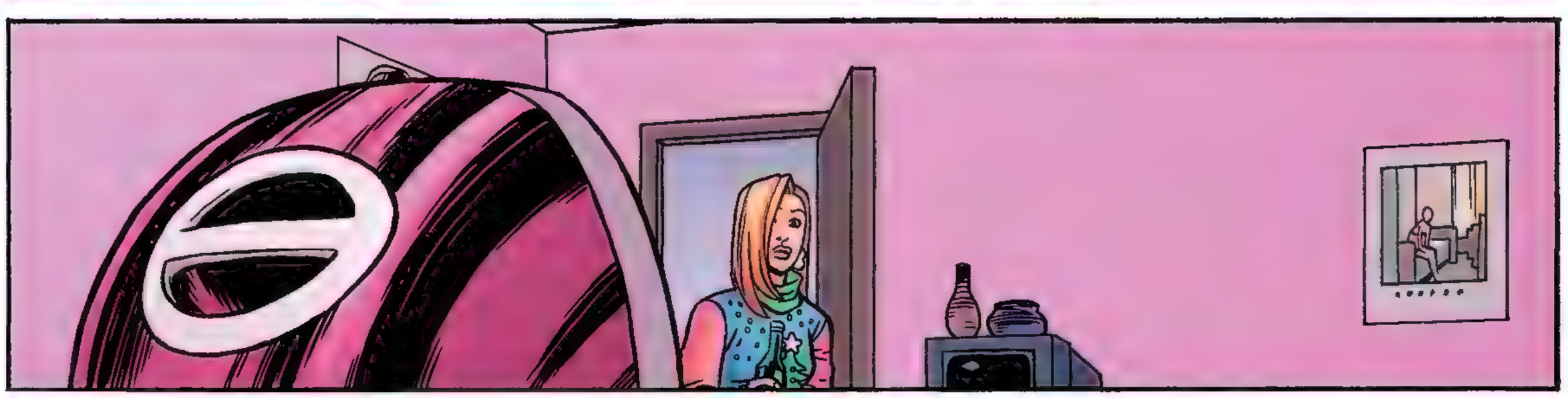
REX...MY PARENTS ARE GOING TO BE BACK HOME SOON. AND, YOU KNOW, IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS. I SHOULD PROBABLY PUT IN AN APPEARANCE.

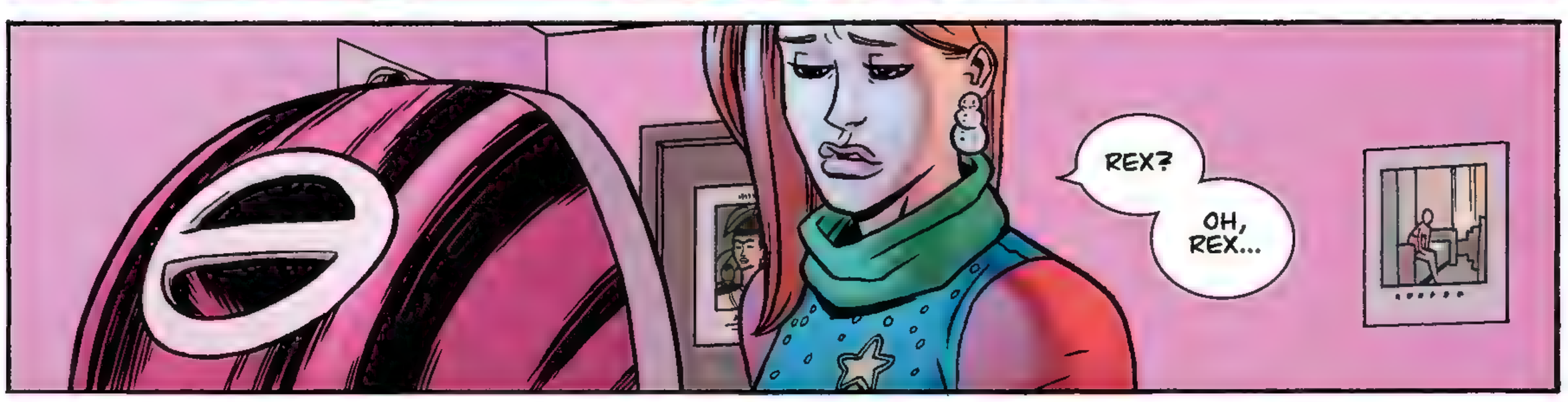
YEAH, YEAH. OF COURSE.

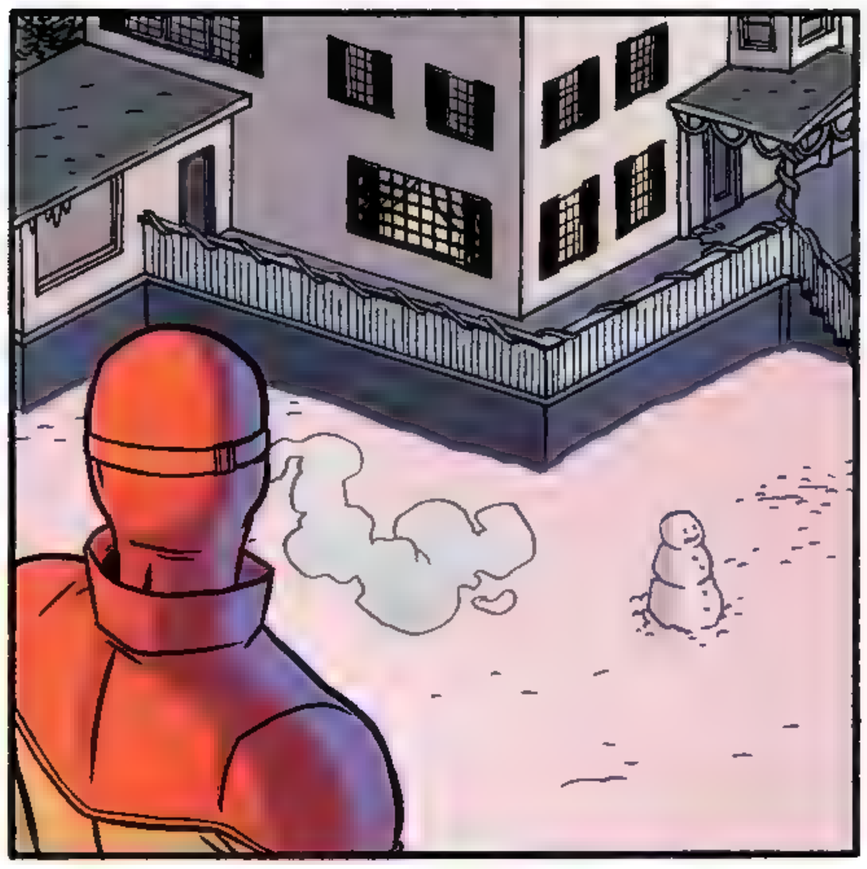
...

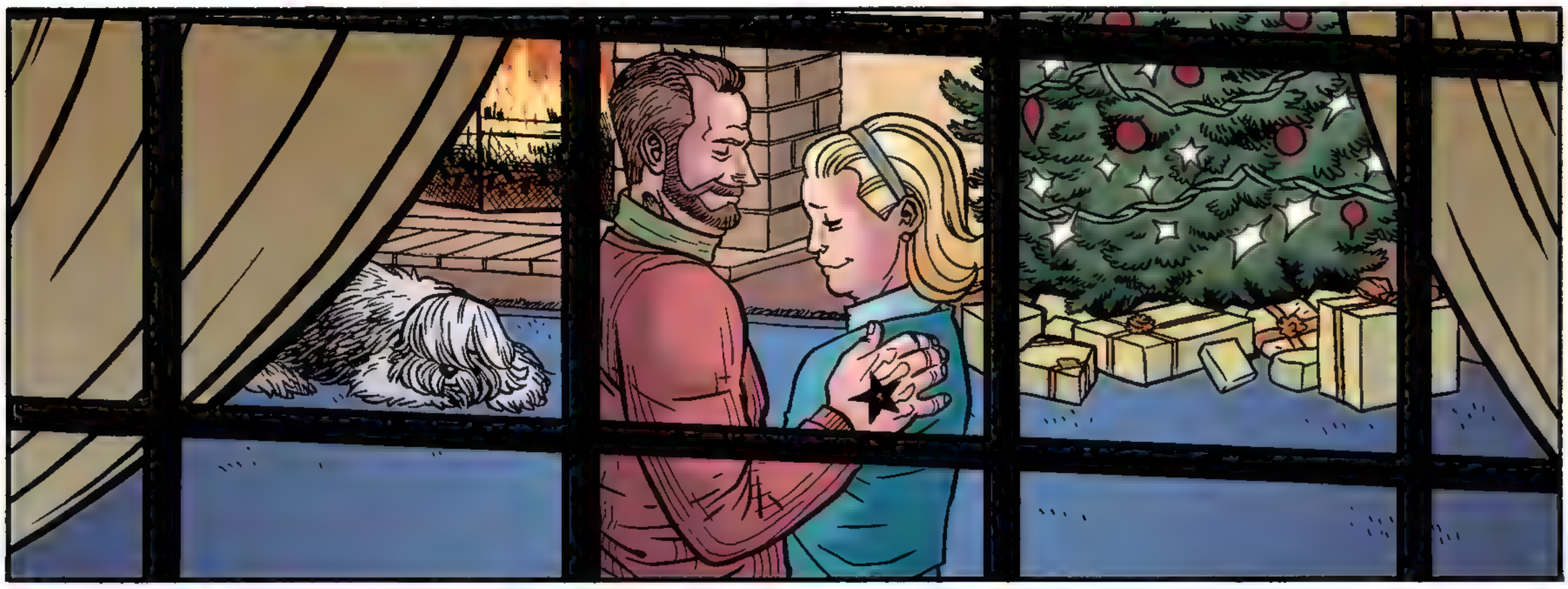
HEY, COULD YOU GET ME SOME STEAK SAUCE?






REX?
OH, REX...





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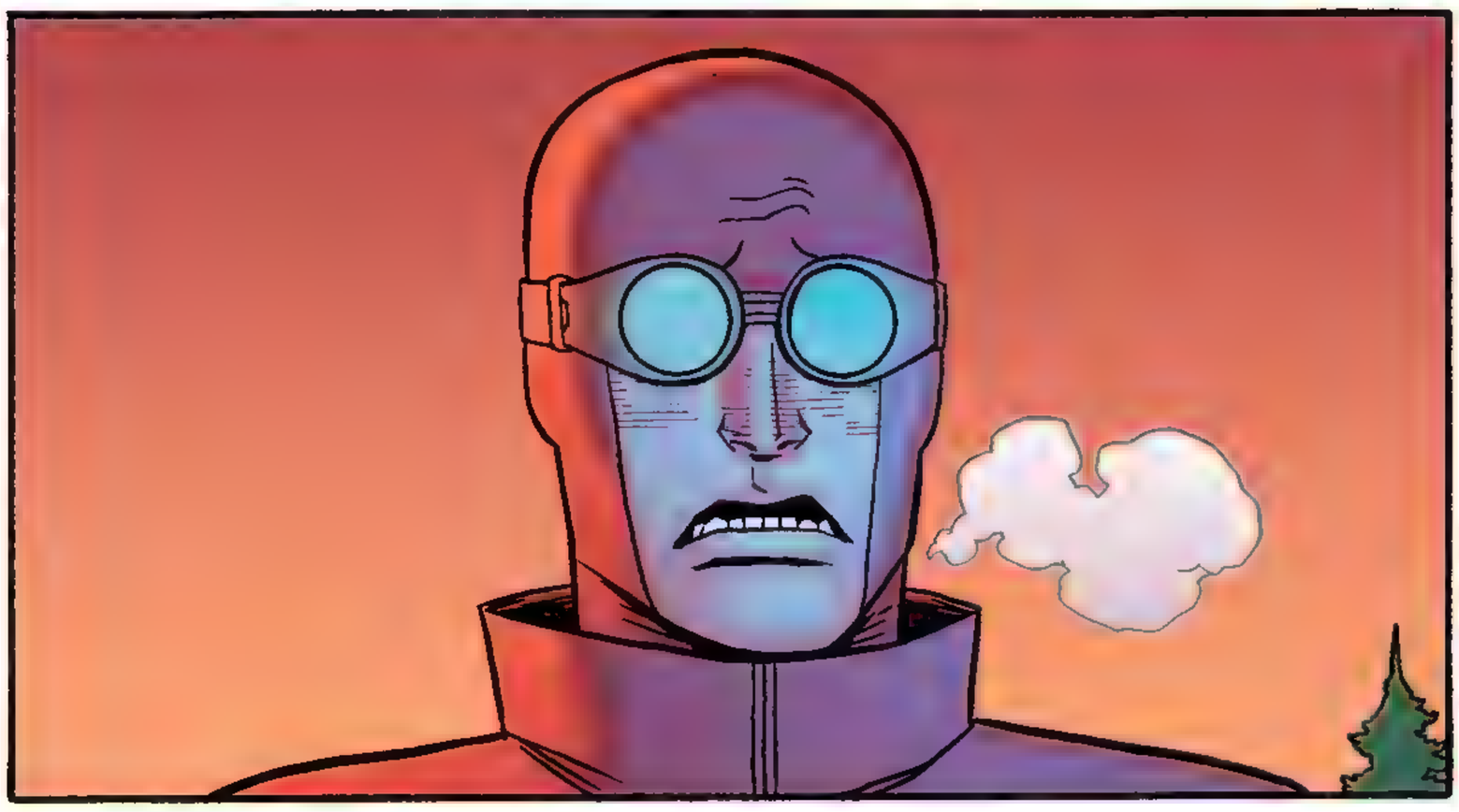

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T DO IT.

YEAH. I GUESS THAT MAKES ME A COWARD, ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE.

NO, I'D SAY IT MAKES YOU A GOOD PERSON.

MAYBE I JUST COULDN'T DO IT WITH YOU WATCHING. MAYBE I'LL COME BACK LATER.

BUT PROBABLY YOU WON'T.

YEAH. PROBABLY I WON'T.

...

THIS REALLY SUCKS.

LET'S GO FIND SOMETHING MORE FUN TO DO.

OH... I COULD THINK OF A FUN THING OR TWO THAT WE COULD DO TOGETHER...

STOP THEM, YOU FOOLS!

A DOUBLED CHRISTMAS BONUS GOES TO THE AGENT WHO BRINGS ME THEIR *HEADS!*

YOU KNOW, THIS IS NOT *AT ALL* WHAT I HAD IN MIND.

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND.

WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME FOR *THAT* LATER.

SWEET!

THEN LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH. TIME FOR *ATOM EVE AND REX SPLODE* TO KICK SOME BUTT!

WHY INVINCIBLE ISN'T IN THIS COMIC, STARRING:

OMNI-MAN!

WRITTEN BY
ROBERT KIRKMAN

PENCILED AND INKED BY
NATE BELLEGARDE

COLORED BY
BILL CRABTREE

LETTERED BY
RUS WOOTON

OH, LOOK, MARK... YOUR FATHER'S HOME EARLY.

SHIMA 11

HEY, DAD. WE STILL GOING TO THE BATTING CAGE THIS WEEKEND?

THAT'S THE PLAN, SON.

DID YOU HAPPEN TO GET YOUR POWERS YET?

NOPE.

OKAY, I'M GOING TO GET DRESSED FOR DINNER.

SHIMA 11

THE END.

WHY INVINCIBLE ISN'T IN THIS COMIC, STARRING:

OMNI-MAN!

WRITTEN BY
ROBERT KIRKMAN

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NATE BELLEGARDE

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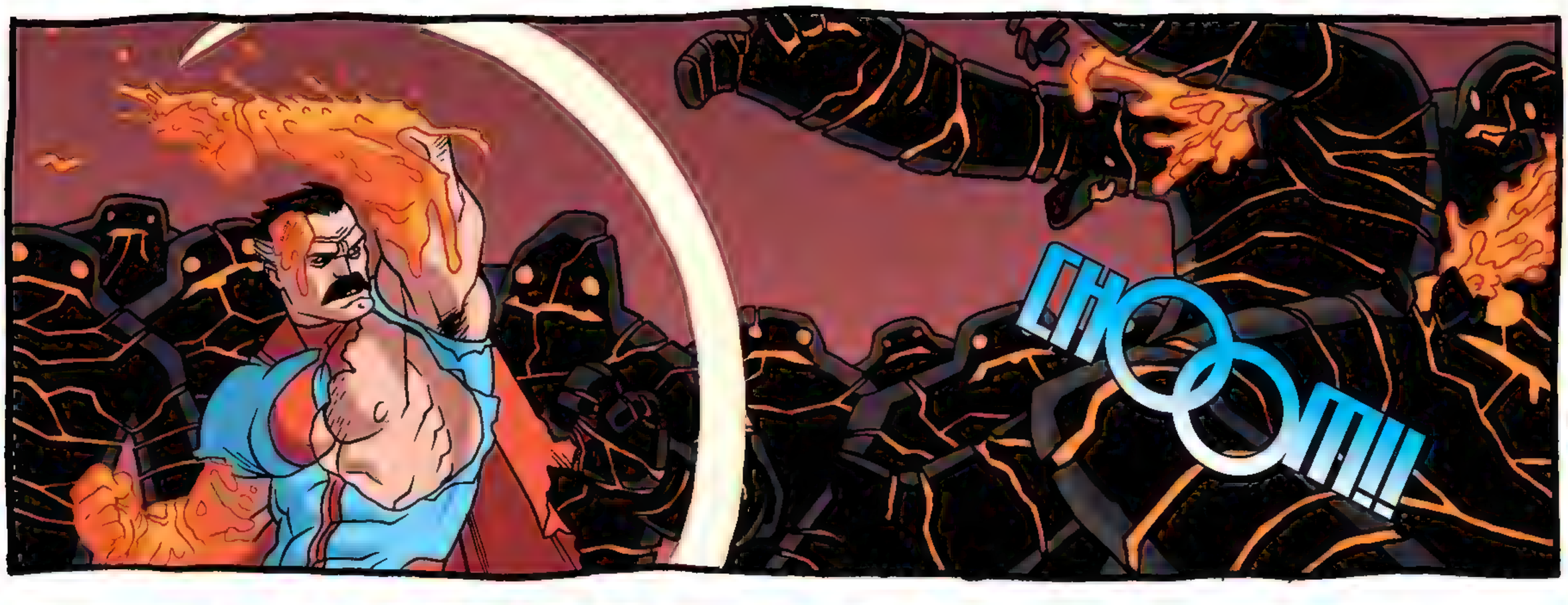
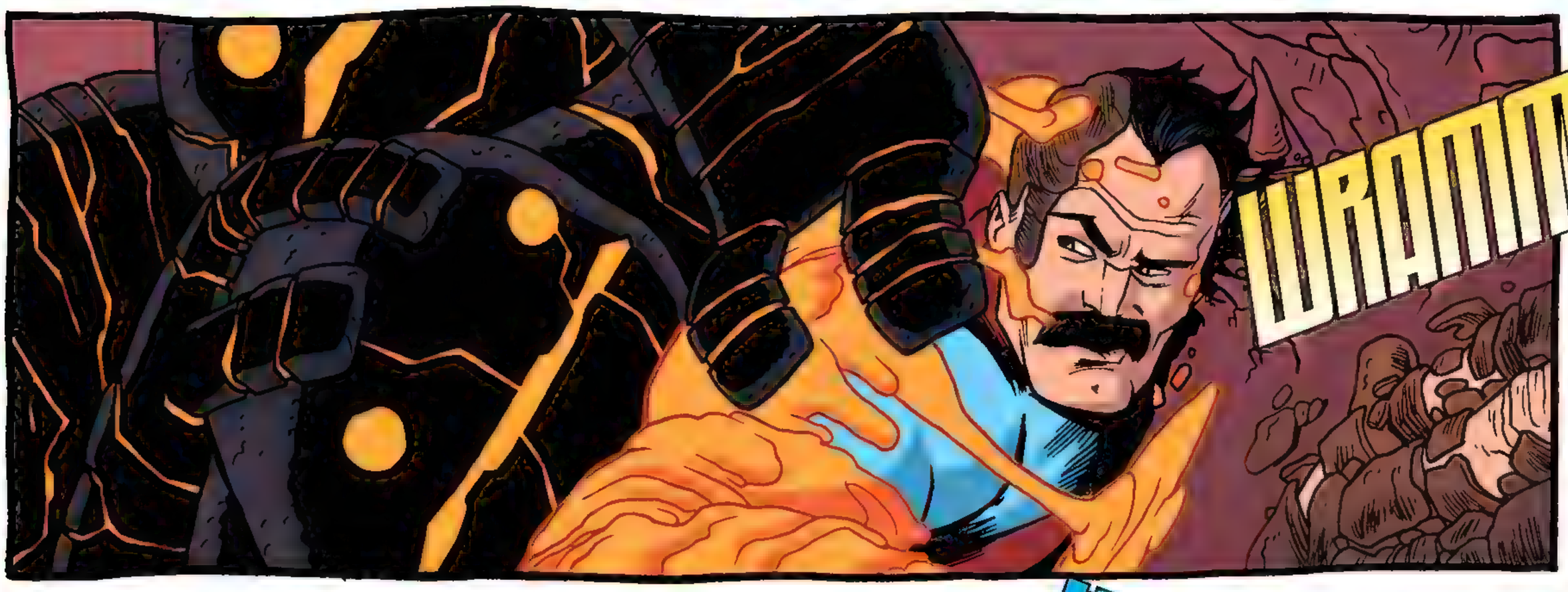
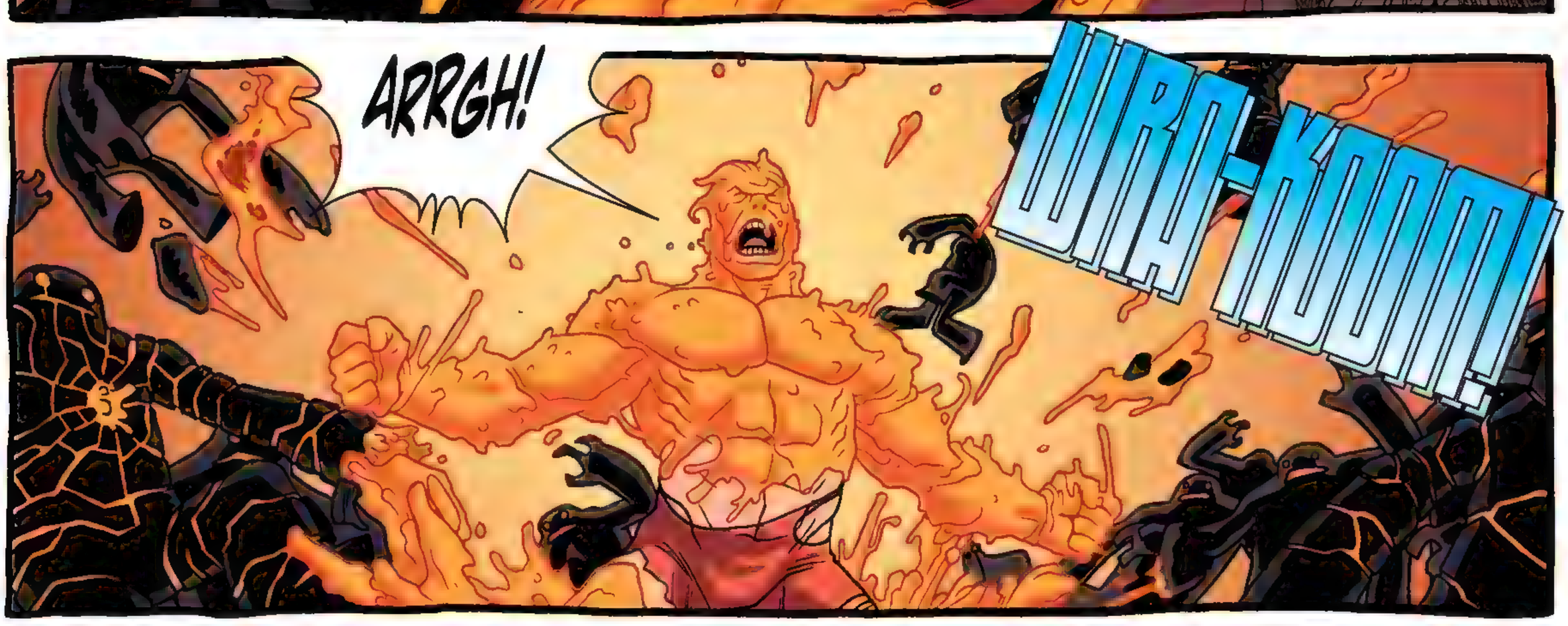
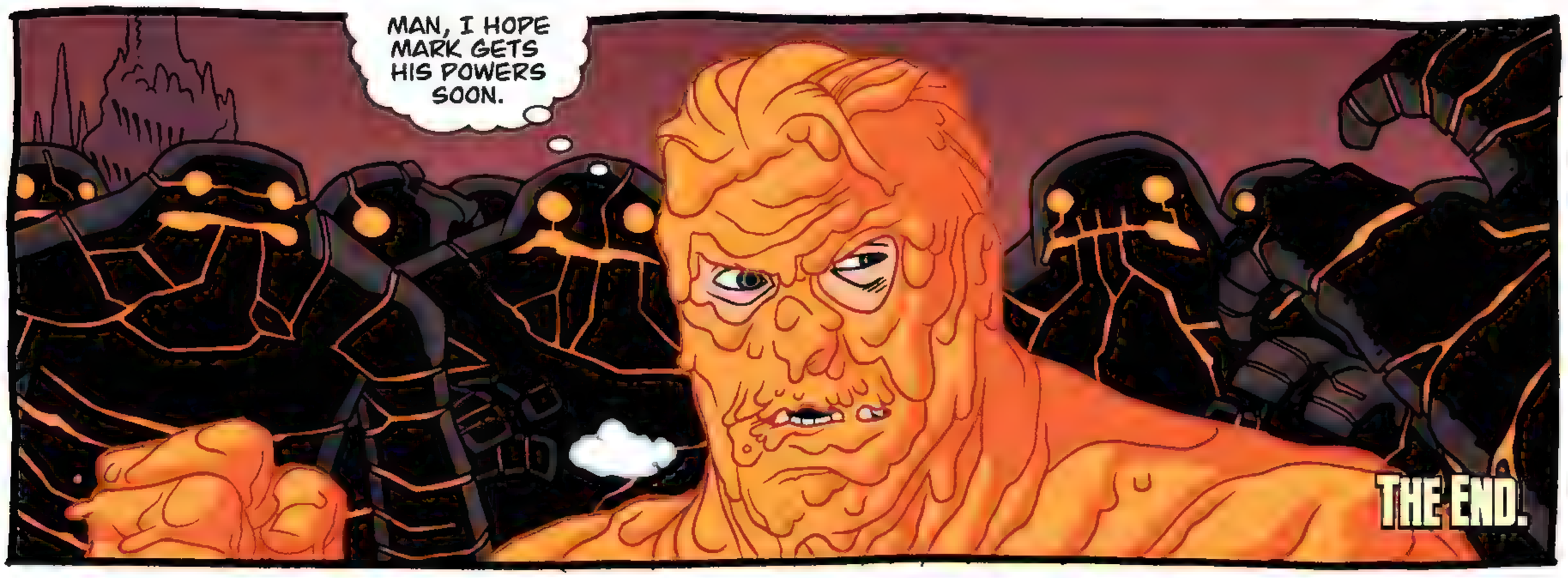

CHOOM!!!


WRAMM!


ARRGH!
KRA-KOOM!


MAN, I HOPE MARK GETS HIS POWERS SOON.
THE END.

Benito: Good evening and welcome to Invincible Presents a Sketchbook. I am your host, Benito, and with me, as ever, is Nate.

Nate: Hell yeah I am! Let's talk about some sketches!

Benito: Cory Walker drew this cover, so we cannot say for sure what his process was. I can only imagine that he sat at his drawing table gently weeping and saying to himself, "I'm sad that I'm drawing." But this is only supposition.

Nate: I like this cover a lot because it looks like Atom Eve laid eggs in Invincible's chest and now a tiny little Atom Eve alien'd her way out of his ribcage. Also, Cory sure knows how to draw a foxy lady, I'll tell you that for free.

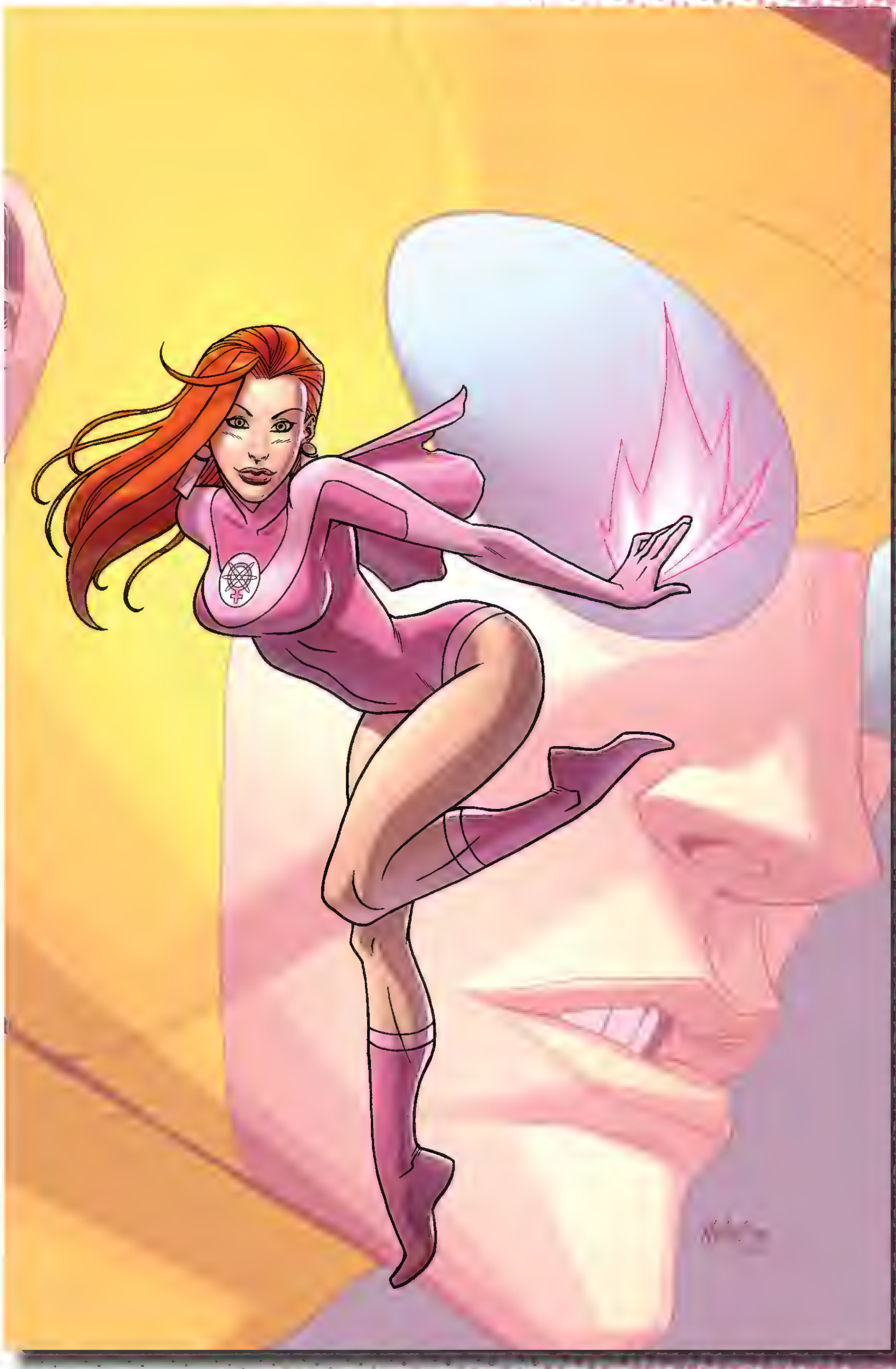
Benito: This cover is basically like the Eve from the first cover heard Nate's joke about her being an alien and so she turned and is going to fight him, and Invincible is all like, "Feets don't fail me now!"

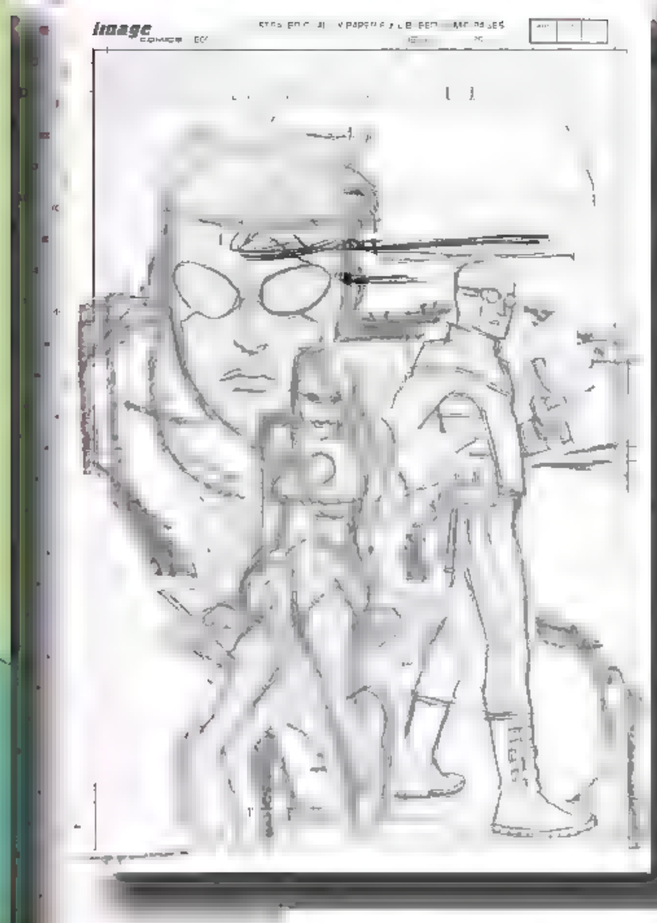
Nate: Man she is even foxy when she's cheesed off.

Benito: Nate, this comic is clearly about a little girl. Why would you draw her with her butt all popped out like that? Like a bubble. Tsk.

Nate: Well, obviously the cover depicts her in her current in-continuity age from the main Invincible title! There is a theme with these covers, I was passed the theme-baton and I'm running with it.

Benito: I guess we needed to remind people that this was an Invincible comic by putting his head all big in all the cover backgrounds. (Hint: his name is also in the title.)





Benito: Here you can see some work from the covers for the Rex mini series. Looks like Nate worked up a lot of different poses for Eve on the various covers, including a special seven-legged variant that never made it into the final comic.

Nate: Yeah, Robert [Kirkman] asked me to do up a lot of possible poses for the first cover, and that led to me having a reservoir of cover poses to pick from for the future. Handy! But yes, here you can see the magic behind the creation of the cover to issue one. (Not real magic)

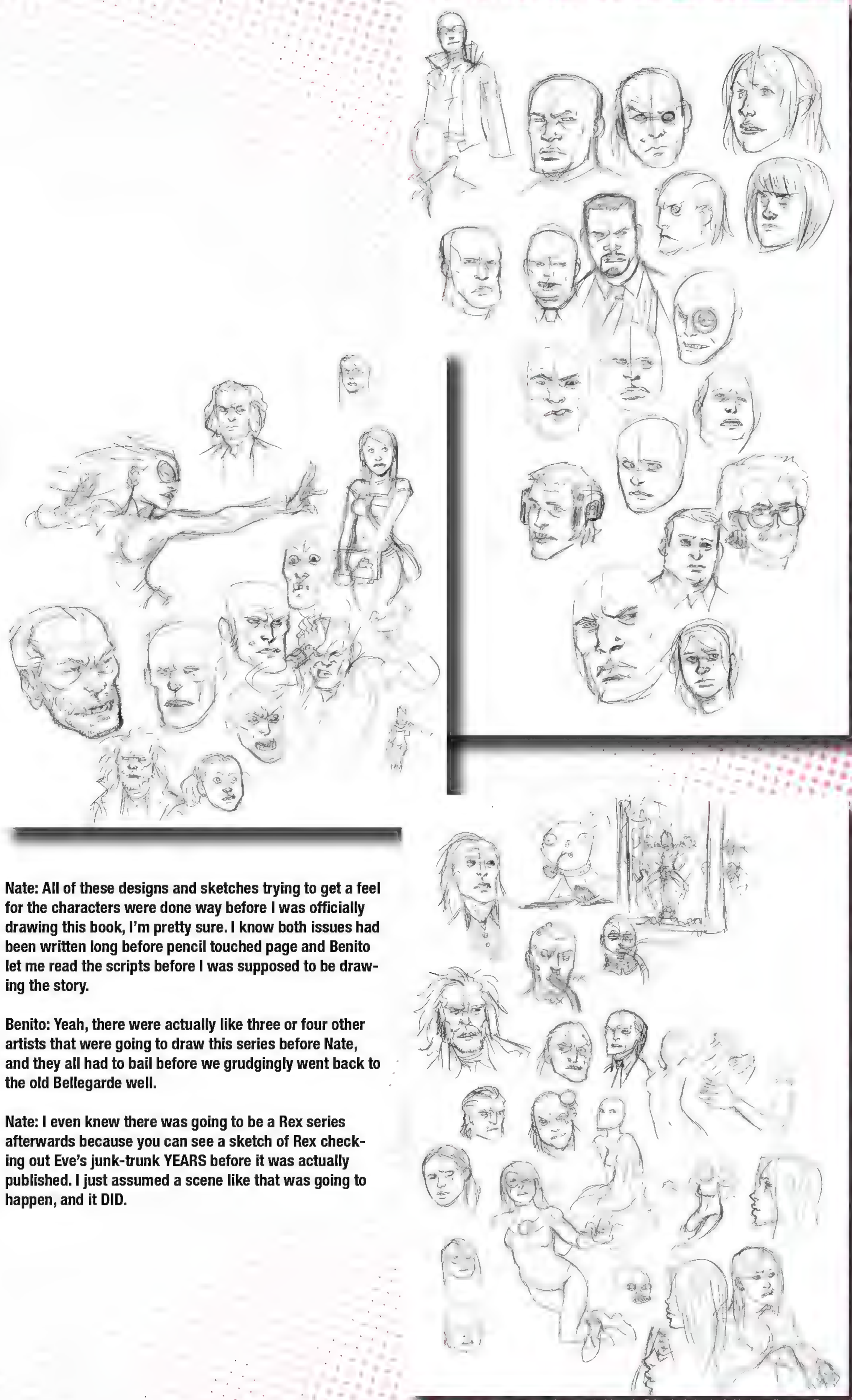
Nate: This cover is not a favorite. I think I kind of whiffed it on Eve's whole... situation. Sorry everyone.

Benito: Why? Because she doesn't have passive, doe-eyed porn-face and stretchy, silly putty Michael Turner hips like every other woman on a comics cover? FEH, I say. I like this cover. So shut your cakemouth.

Benito: Hey, this one kind of reflects story content! Before I knew the "Atom Eve" was going to be added to the title of this mini, I wanted a cover with Invincible in the background lookin' all smirky and covering up the "p" in the title so that it said "Invincible RESENTS Rex Splode." But that's the kind of joke that's only funny to me, so instead we got sexy poses and smooches.

Nate: Right off the bat, I knew this had to be a cover. It was one of the first ideas I had and I'm glad I got to draw it. Cause check it out, in the background, there is totally an ATOMIC... EXPLOSION. Hey, Benito, do you get it?

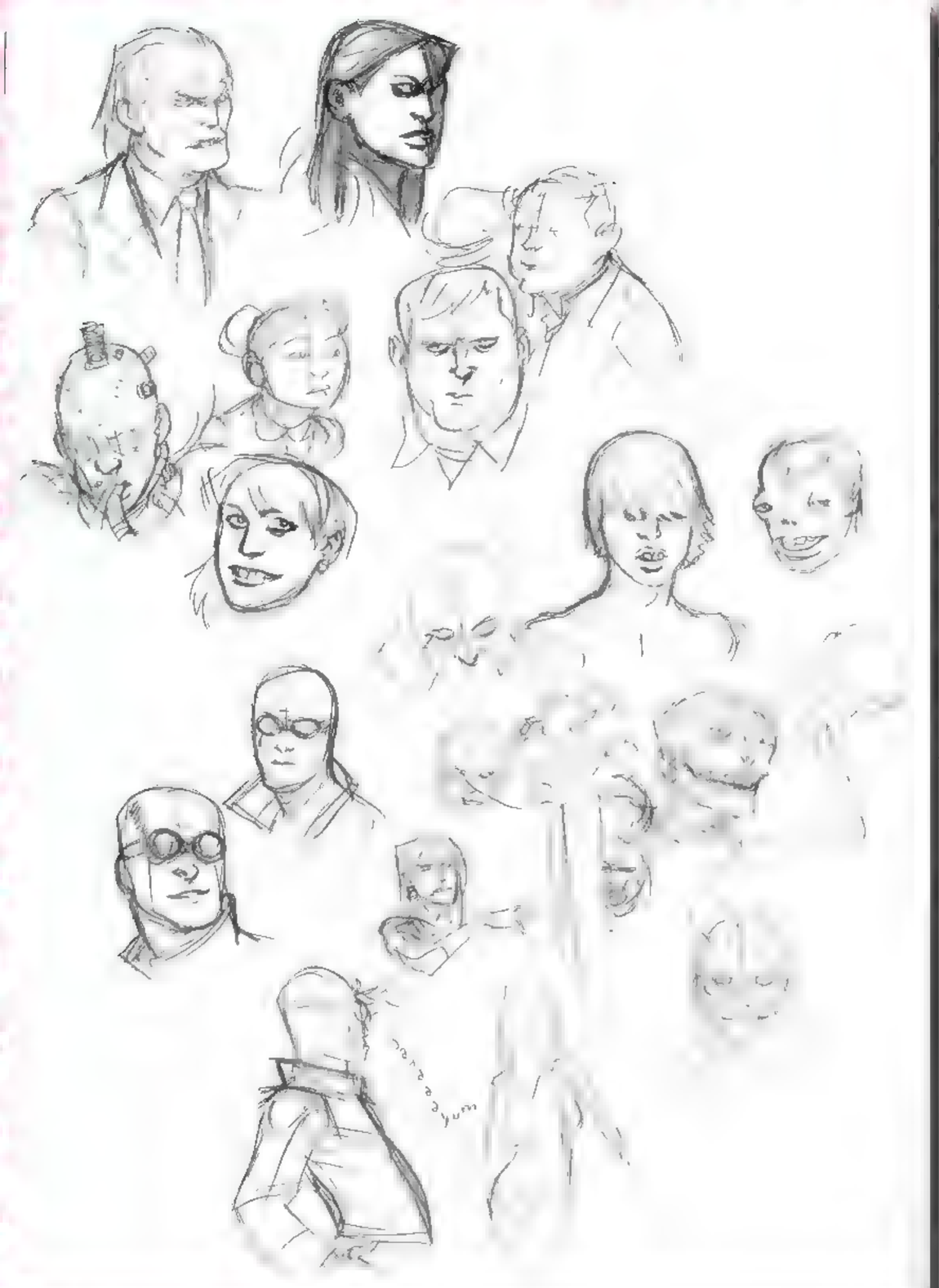
Benito: Yes.

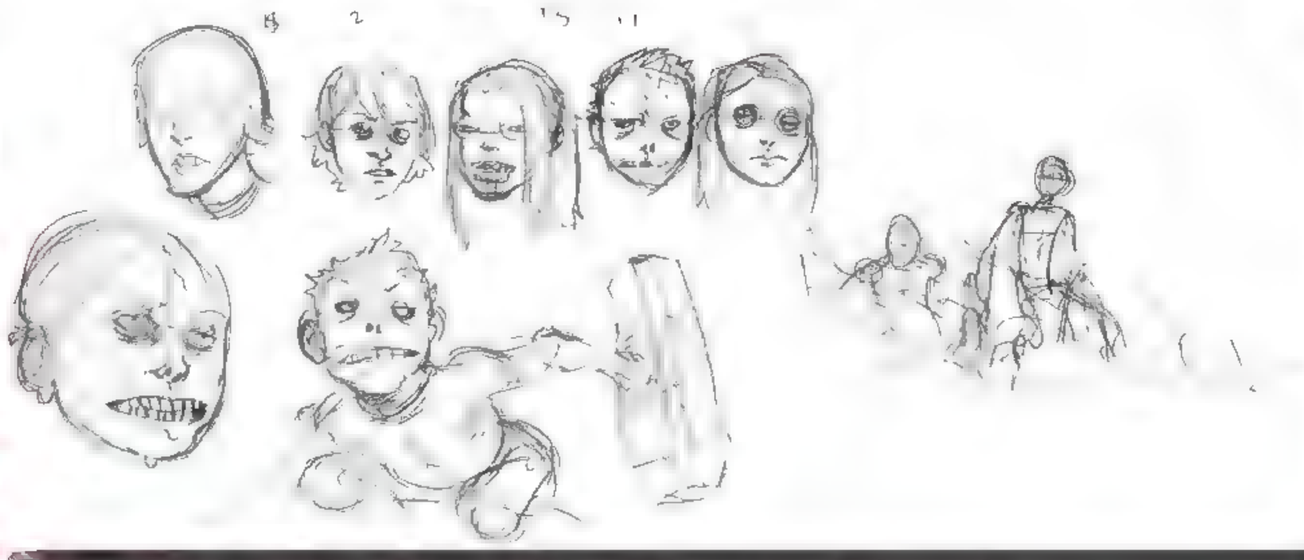


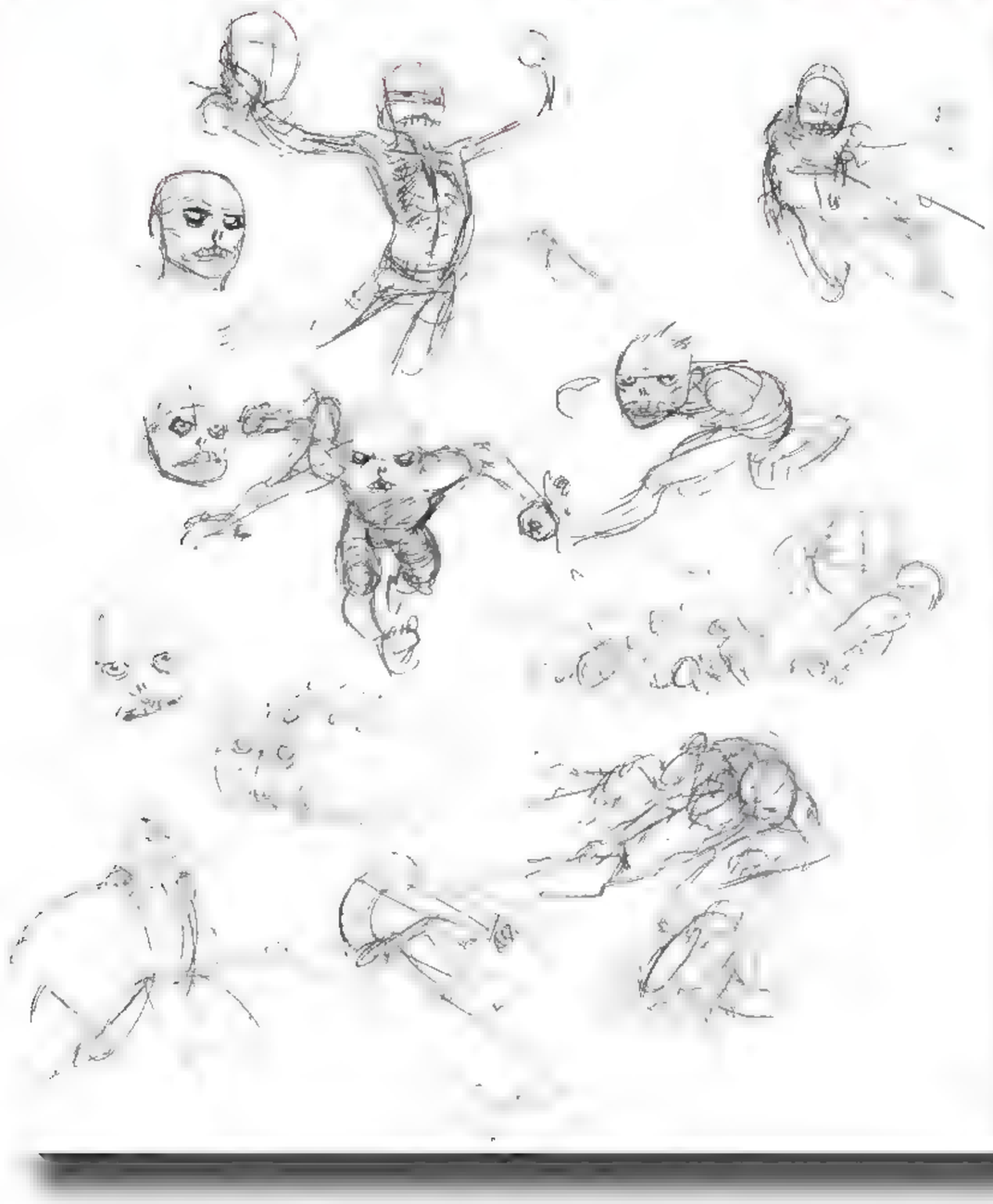
Nate: All of these designs and sketches trying to get a feel for the characters were done way before I was officially drawing this book, I'm pretty sure. I know both issues had been written long before pencil touched page and Benito let me read the scripts before I was supposed to be drawing the story.

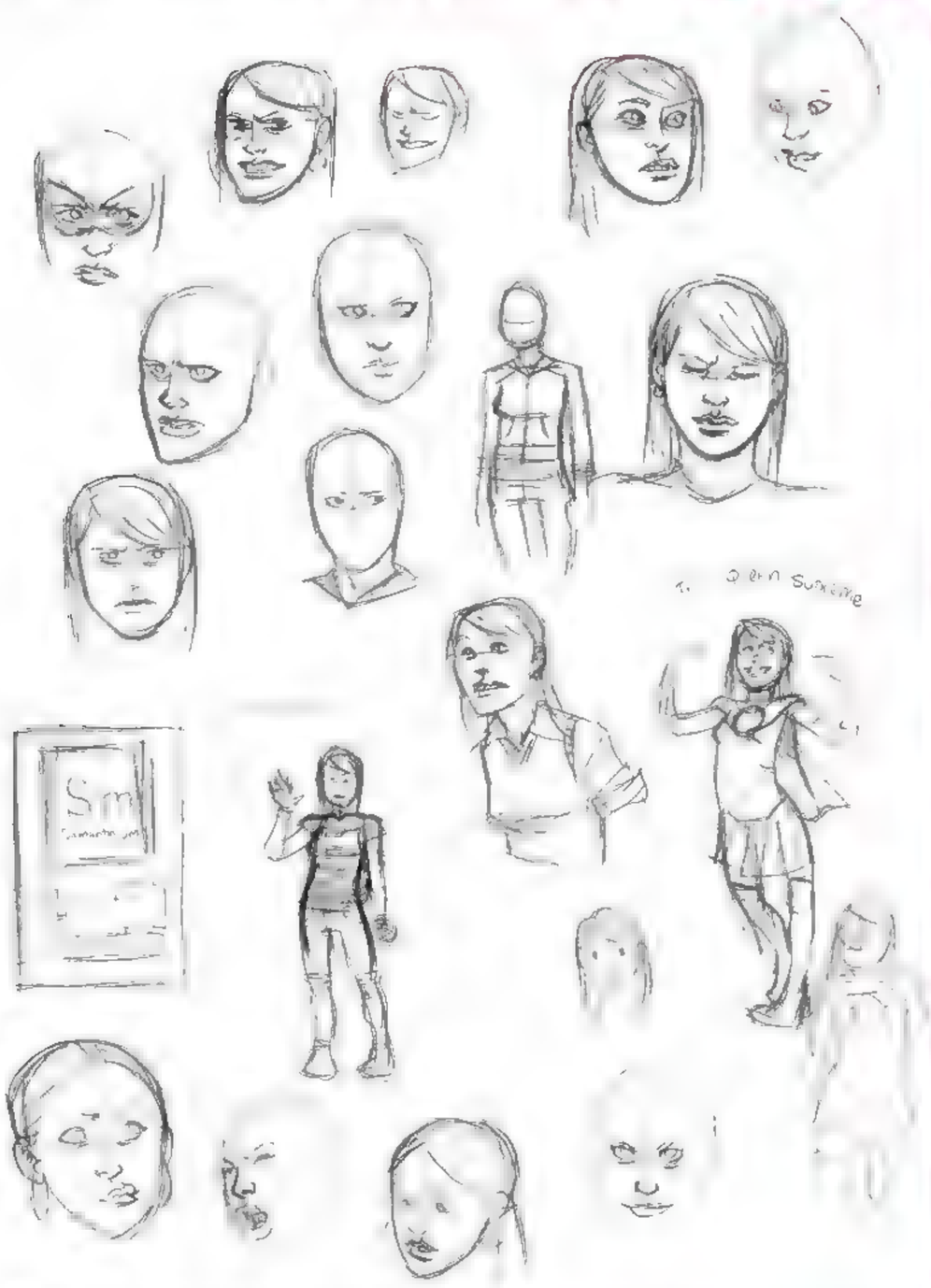
Benito: Yeah, there were actually like three or four other artists that were going to draw this series before Nate, and they all had to bail before we grudgingly went back to the old Bellegarde well.

Nate: I even knew there was going to be a Rex series afterwards because you can see a sketch of Rex checking out Eve's junk-trunk YEARS before it was actually published. I just assumed a scene like that was going to happen, and it DID.





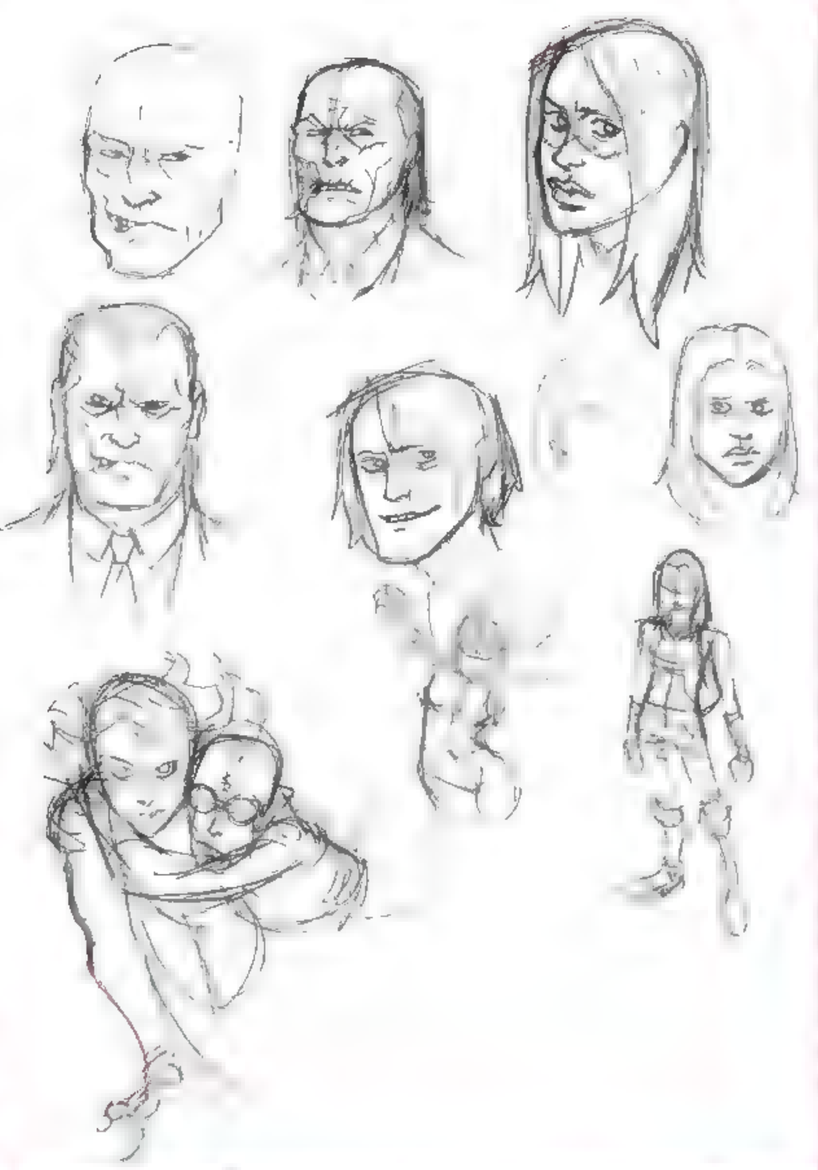


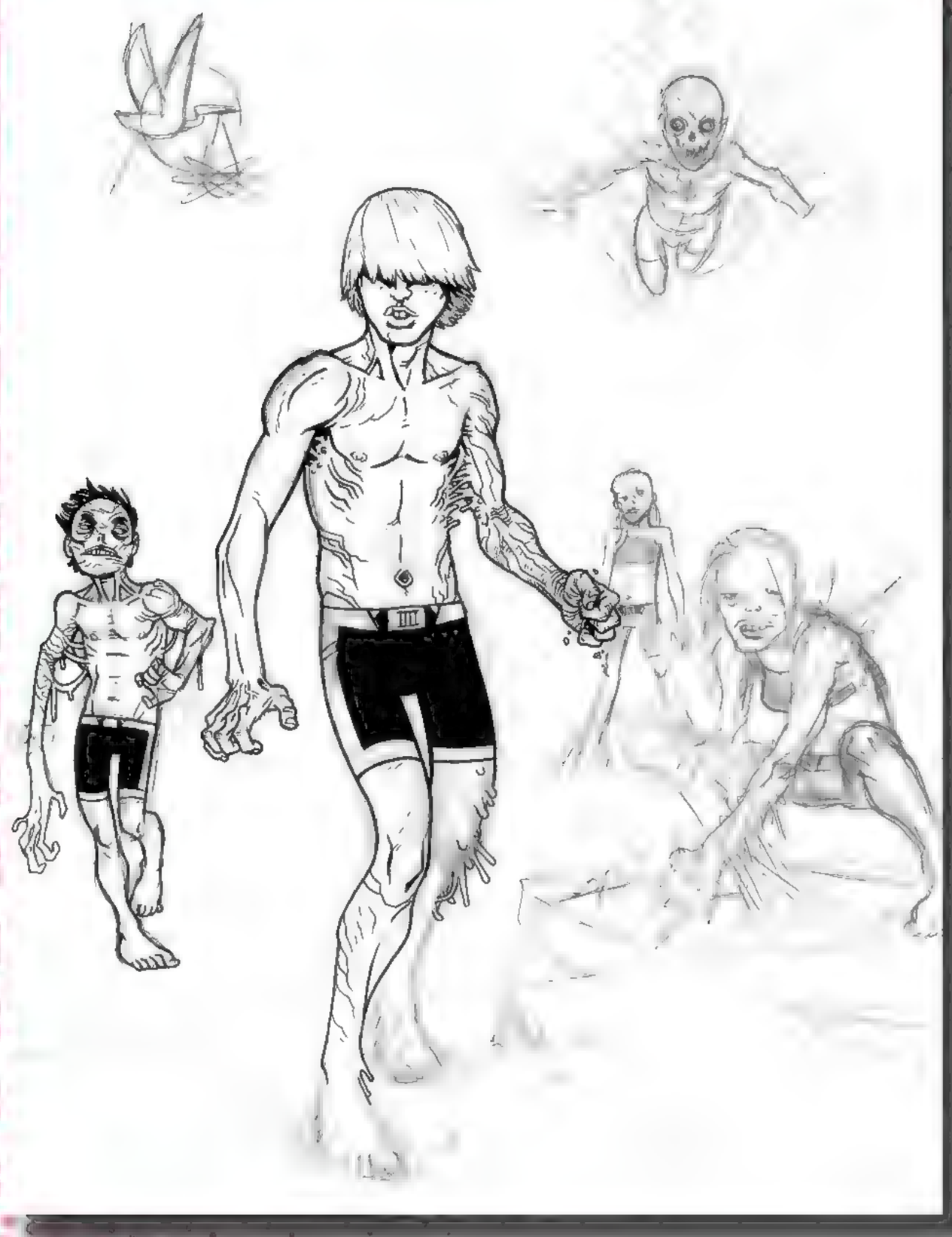


Nate: I was actually surprised at how much Rex was in these old, old sketches.

Benito: I'm not. You're the kind of person who is always thinking about what's next instead of finishing what's right in front of him. FACT.

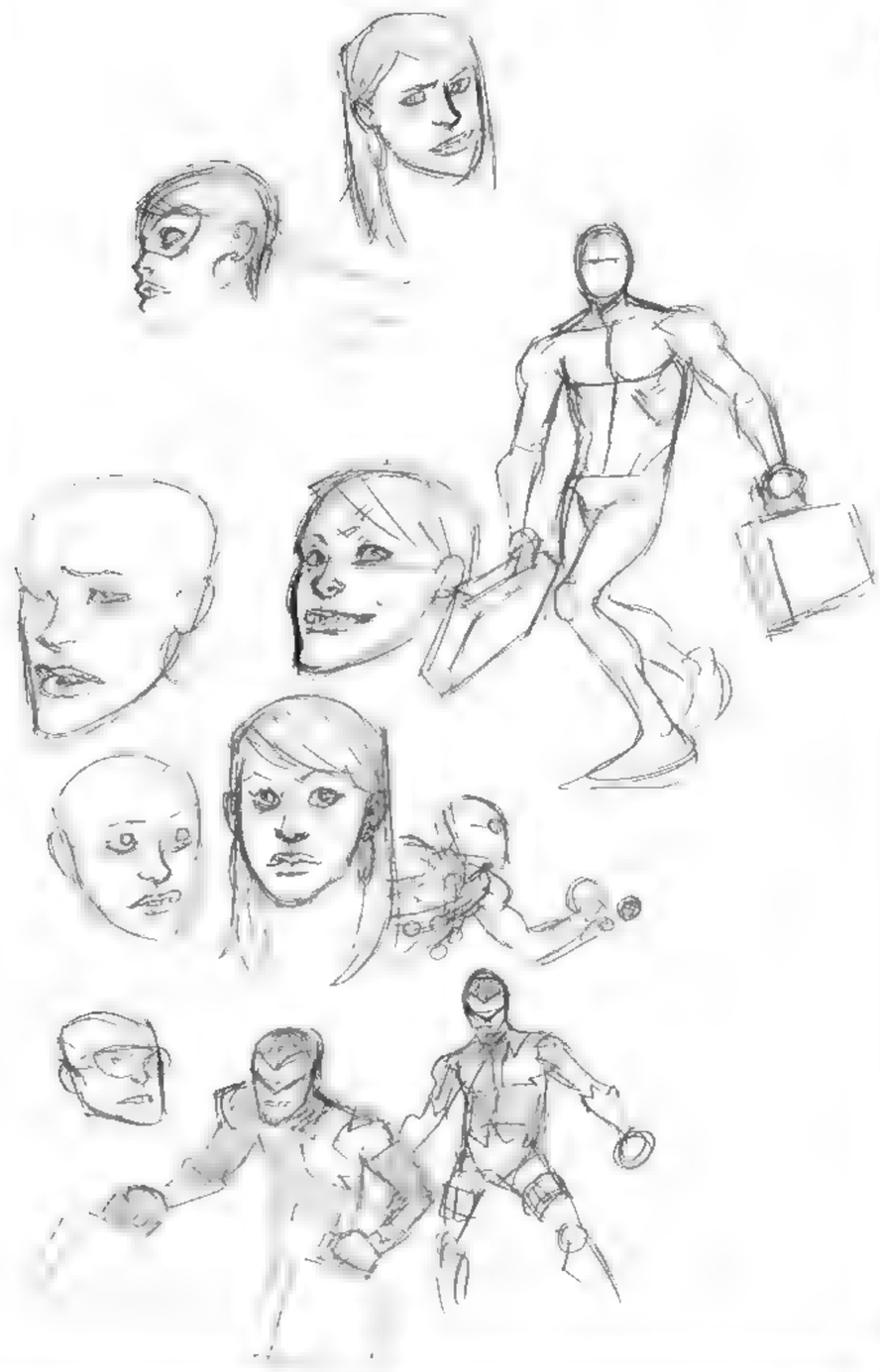
Nate: Diss!





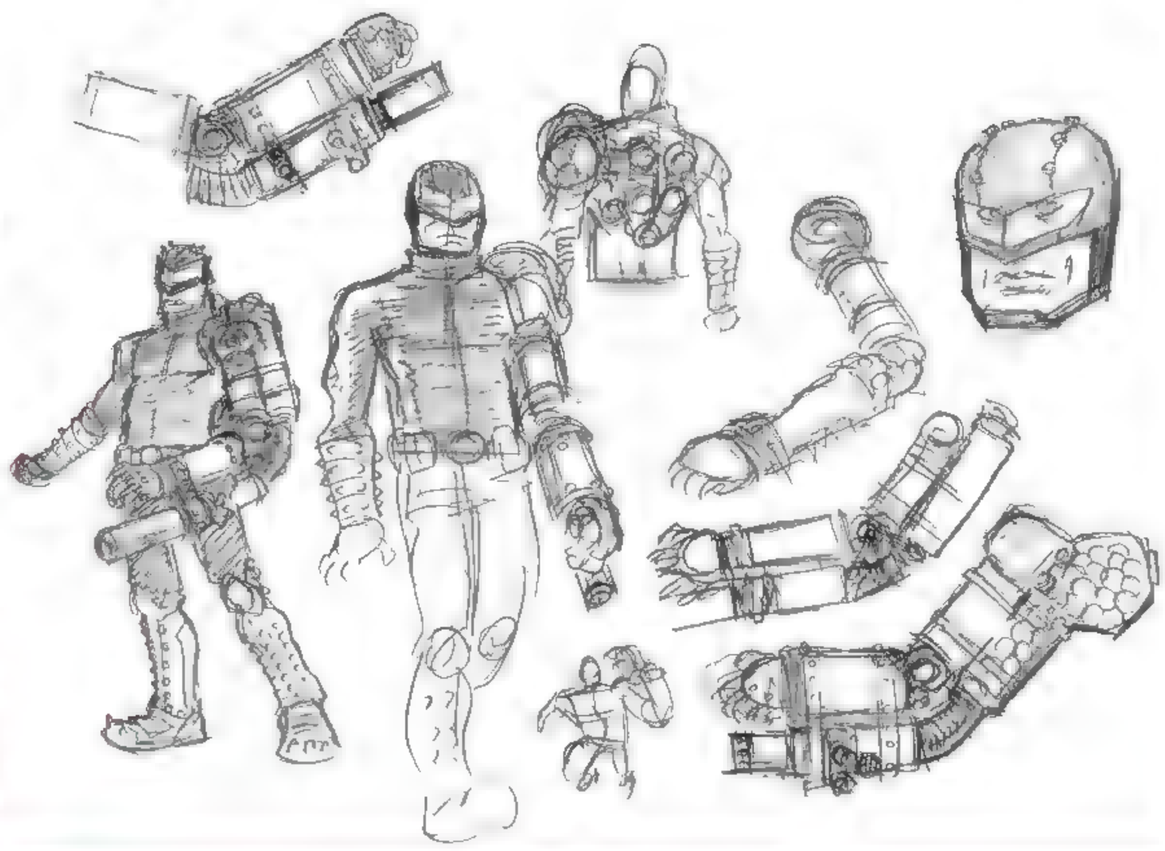
Benito: So here we see some almost-but-not-quite final designs for Eve's unnamed half-siblings. They were originally intended to look like a messed-up version of a certain pack of kids with powers, but Nate is a little young for that to be a cultural touchstone for him. So instead, they look like a mash-up of a certain man of elements, Akira, and super-gross medical photos.

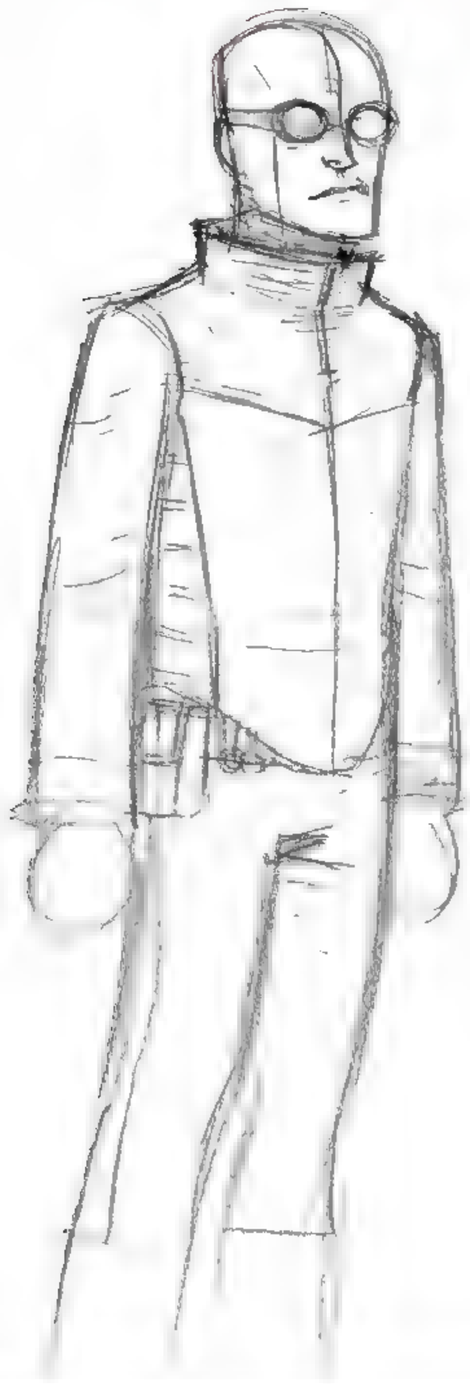
Nate: The touchstones of MY formative years! (Still in progress)



Benito: And here are some designs for this series' original villain, Killcannon. As the writer of this series, you may want to blame me for him, but I can assure you, Killcannon is a 100% Kirkman-original. I have, however, grown to love him. No one can kill the cannon.

Nate: I was so tickled when he showed up in Invincible 58! He is Eve's nemesis! Everytime he shows up it puts a smile on my stupid little face.

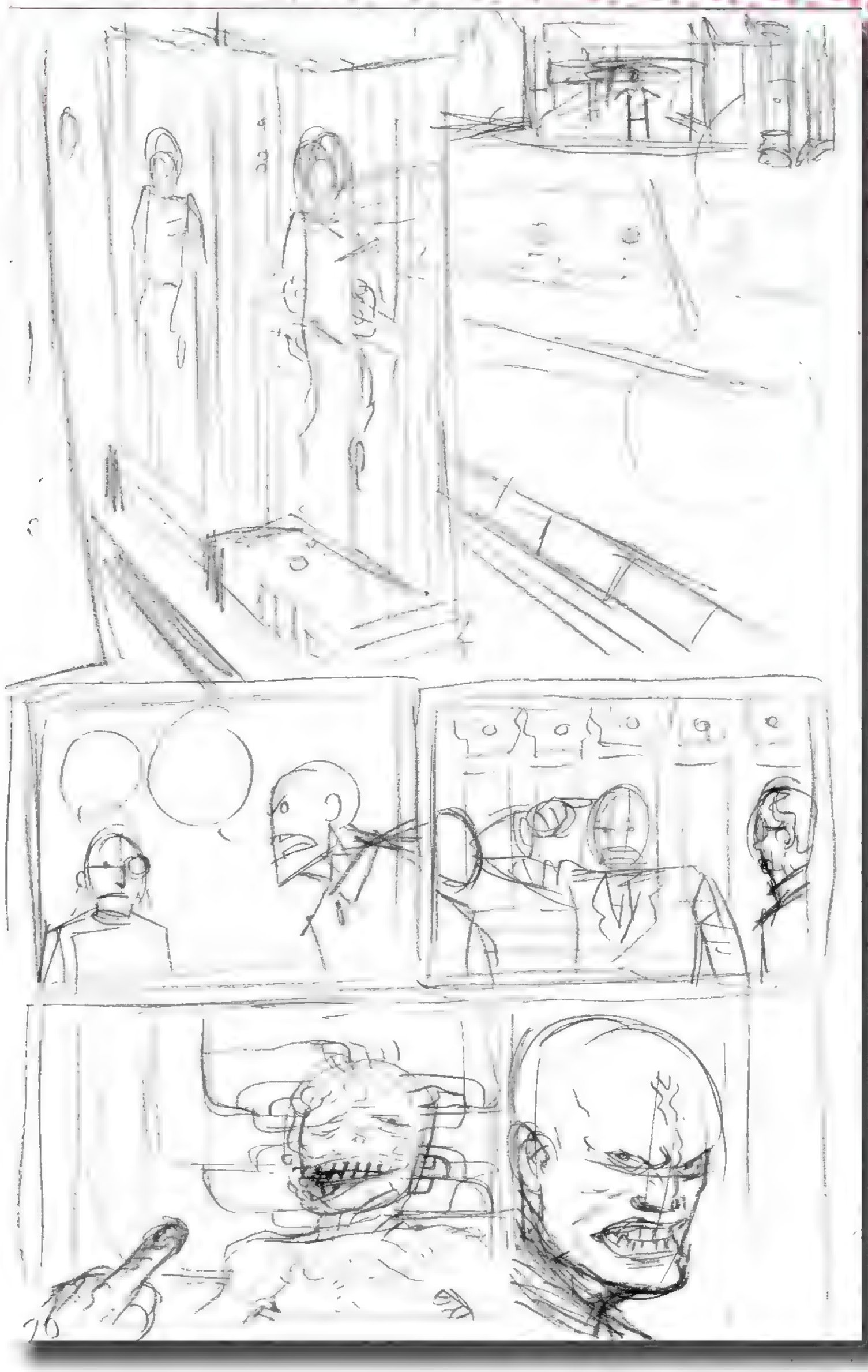




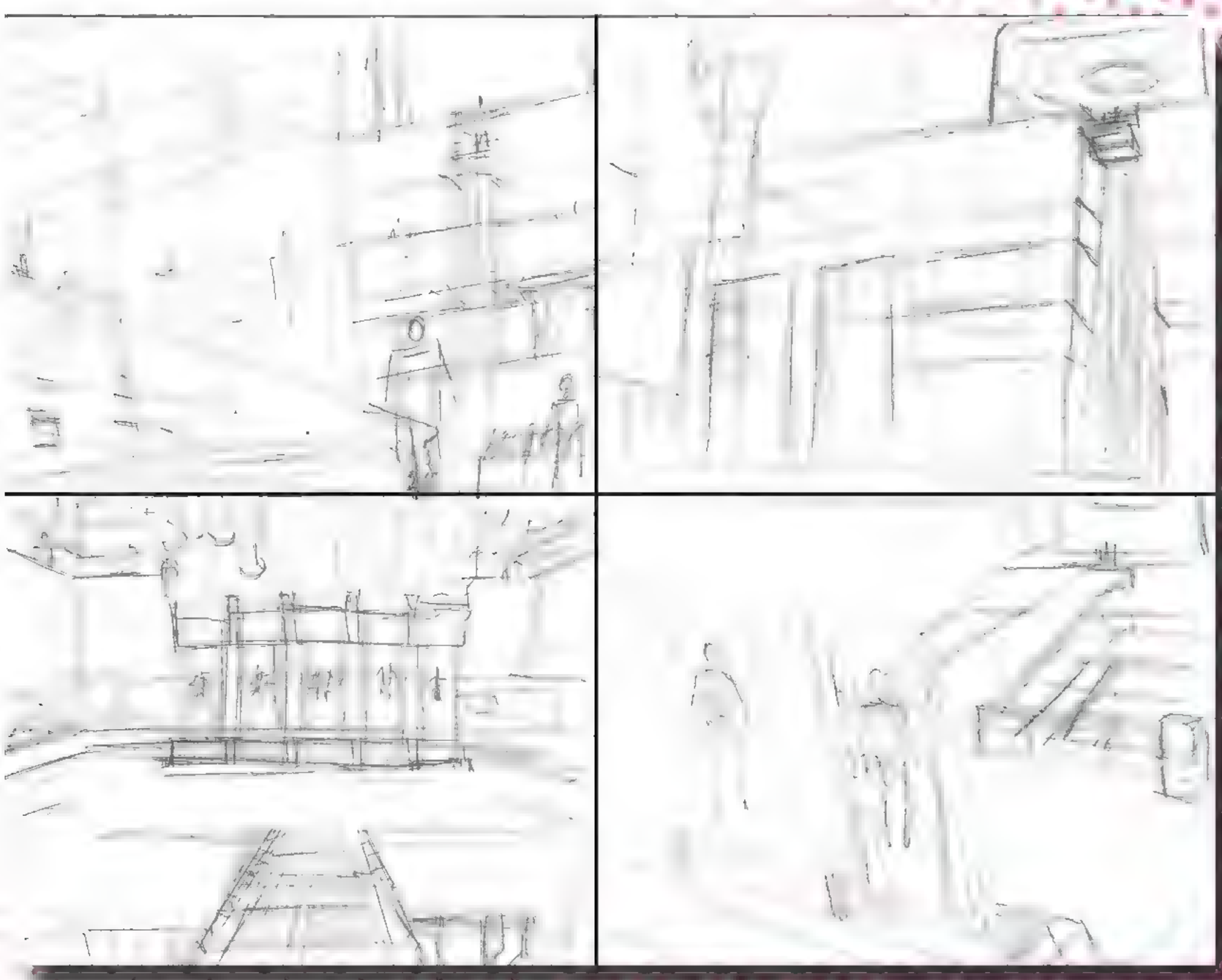
Benito: Here are some sketches of stuff like Eve's Powerpuff Girls-era costume, some civilian clothes, creepy lab stuff and Eve's diamond armor. Also some more Rex.

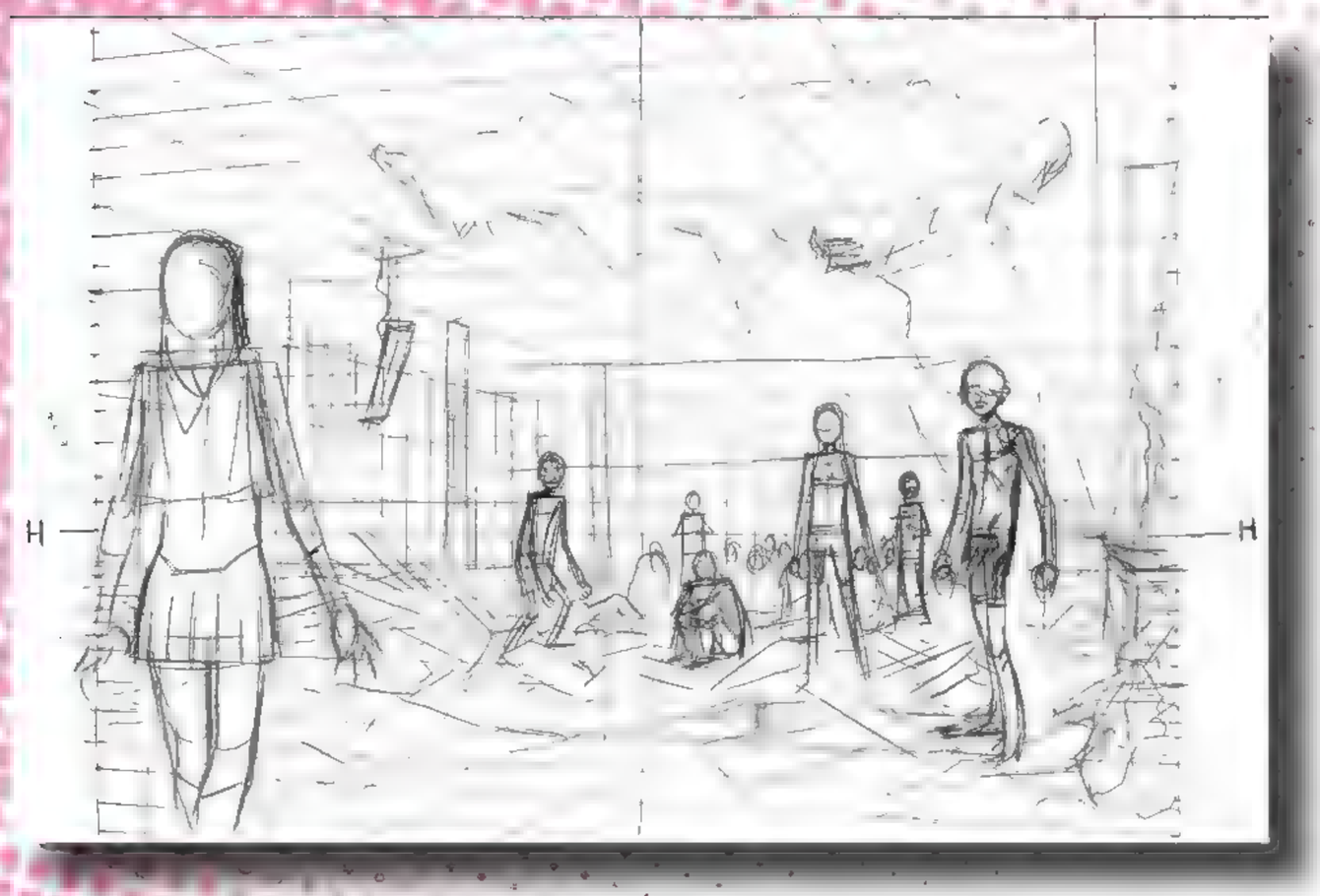
Nate: Also there is a sketch of Cory's awesome dog Heat Vision, who I snuck into the pet-robbery scene. She is really the best dog in the world, SORRY OTHER DOG OWNERS.

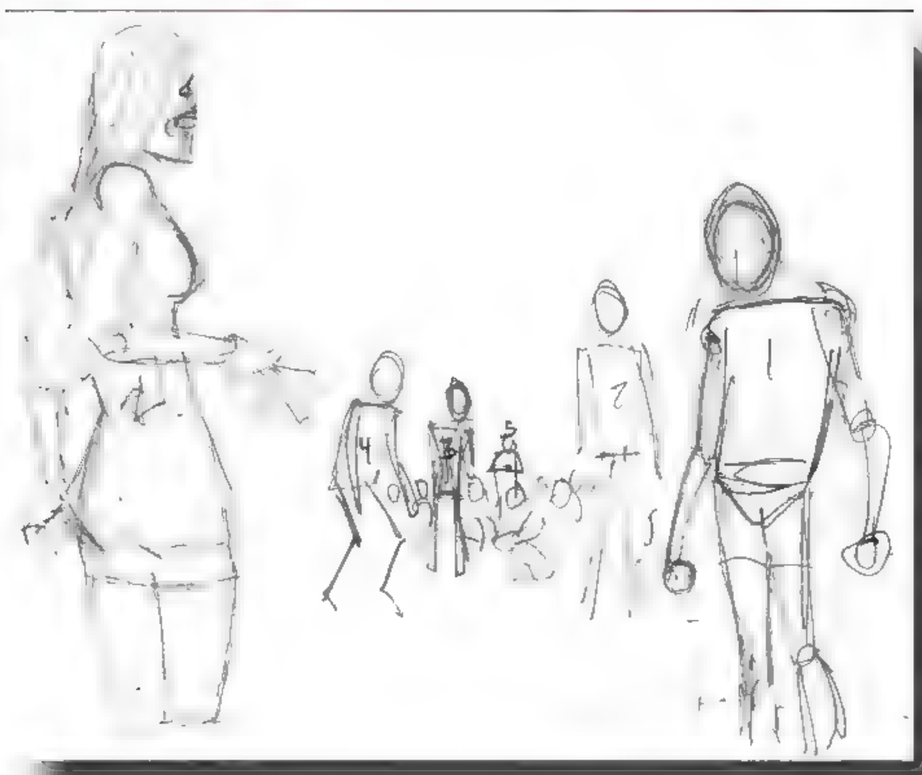
Benito: Layouts!



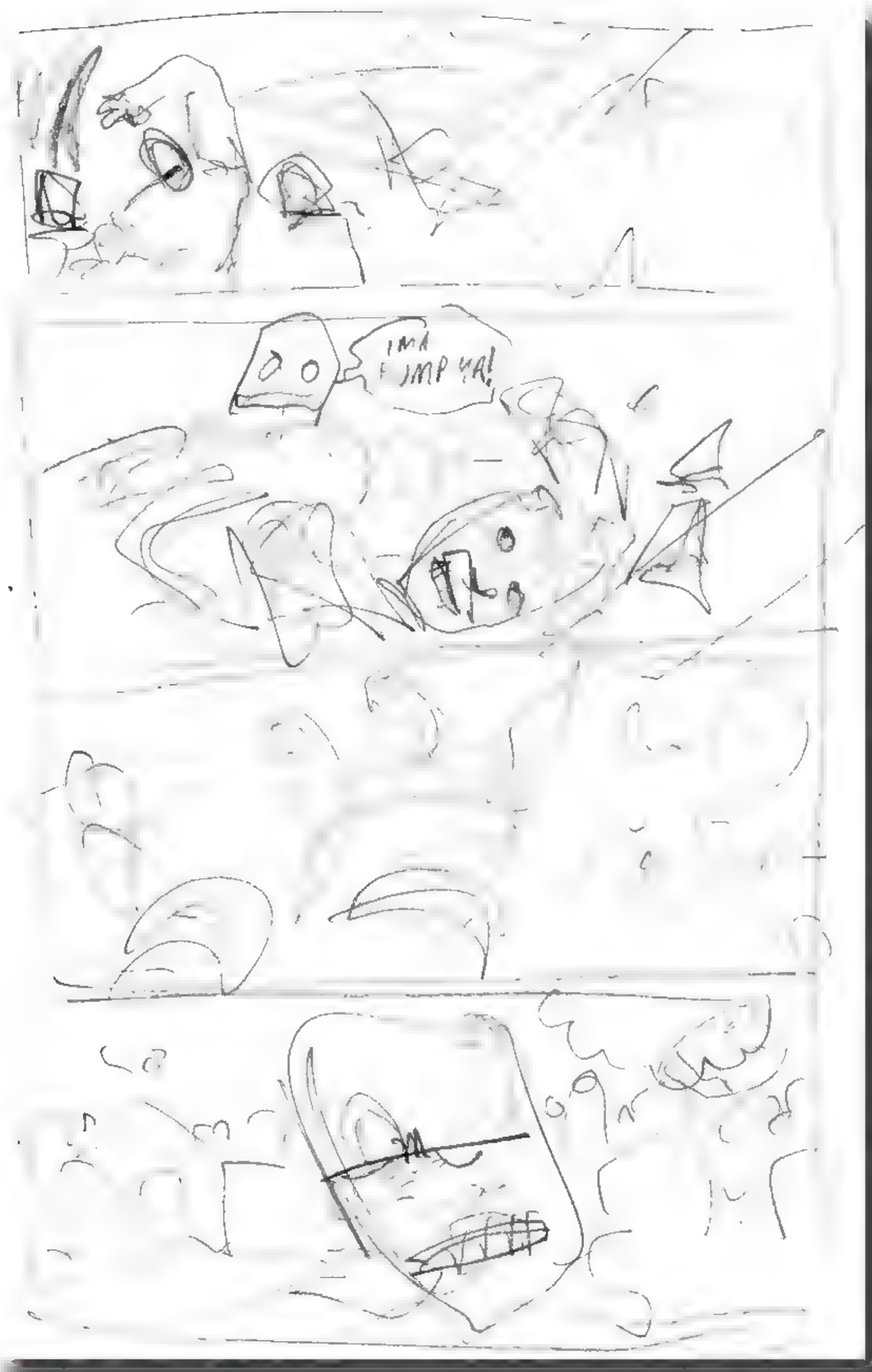
Nate: So, the funny thing about this collection is that it starts with some of my earliest for-serious comic work and ends with my at-the-time-of-printing most recent work. In the beginning you have a lot of stuff that is pretty rough because frankly, I had no idea what I was doing, and here is a good example. I drew five separate layouts for the reveal of Eve's half-siblings in their tanks and none of them were doing the trick. Eventually, Robert the Wise stepped in and gave me a hand.



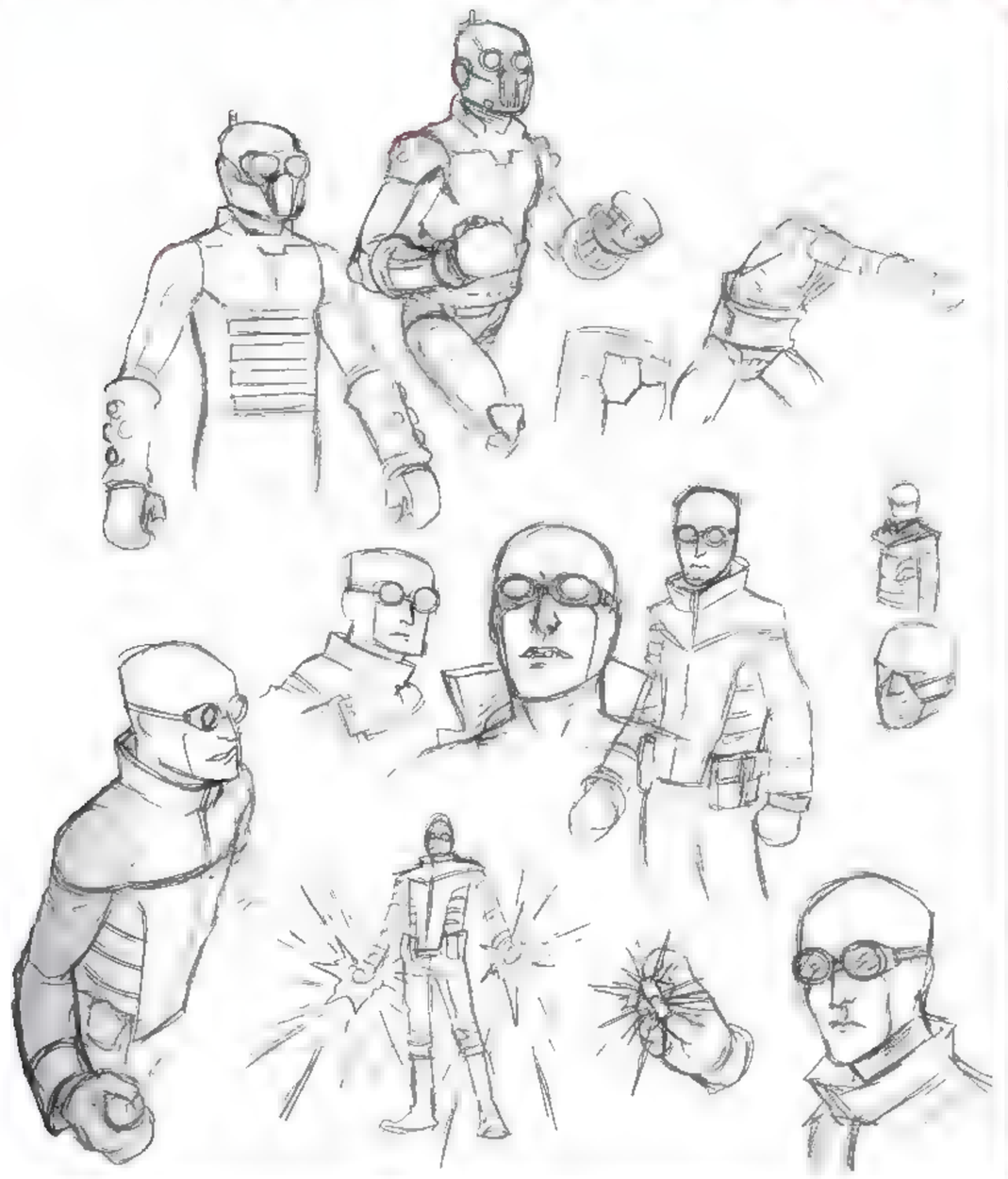


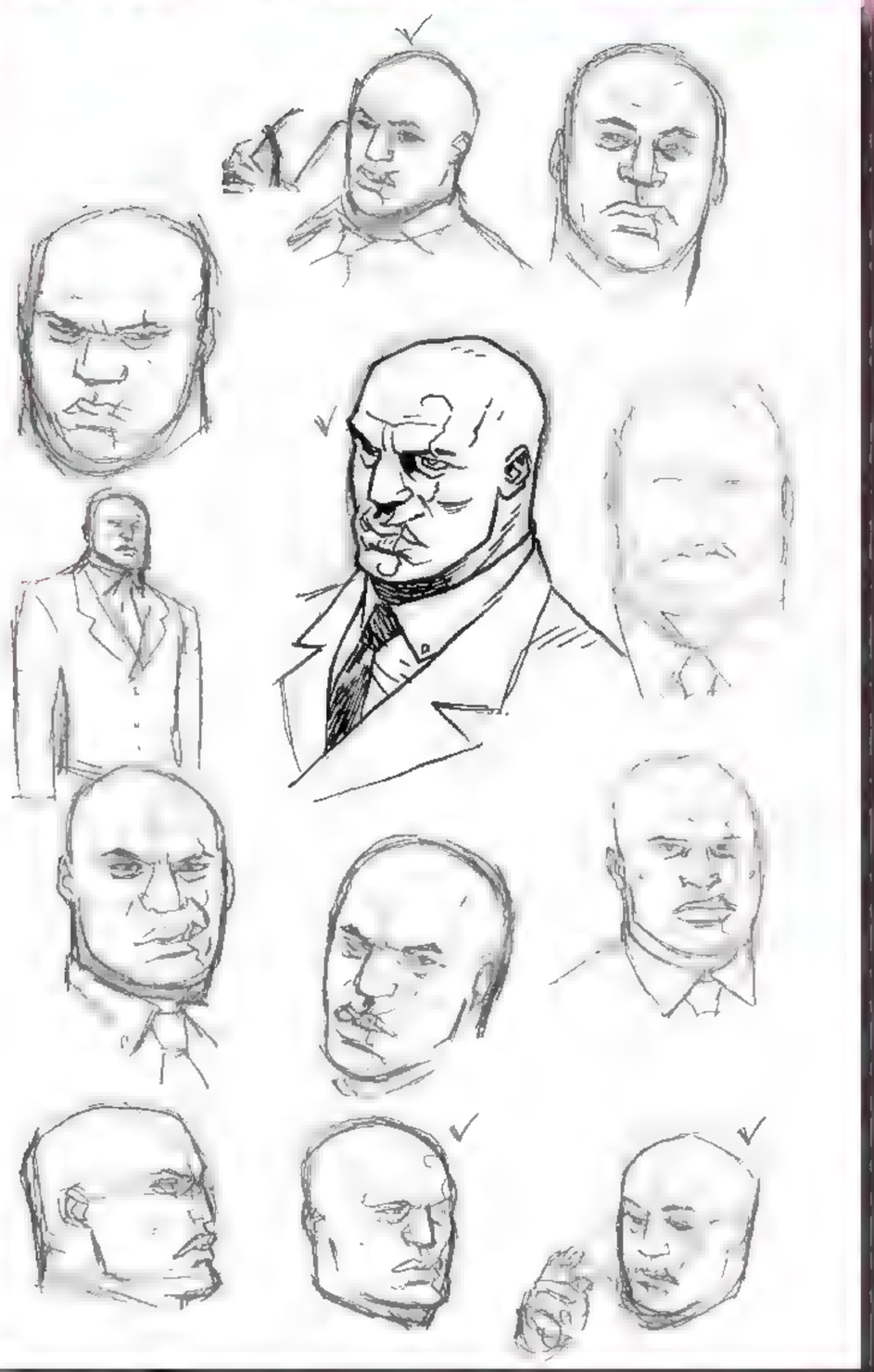


Nate: Here is another situation where I tried to draw something in the wrong and stupid way and he swooped in and saved me from embarrassment and familial dishonor. What a guy!



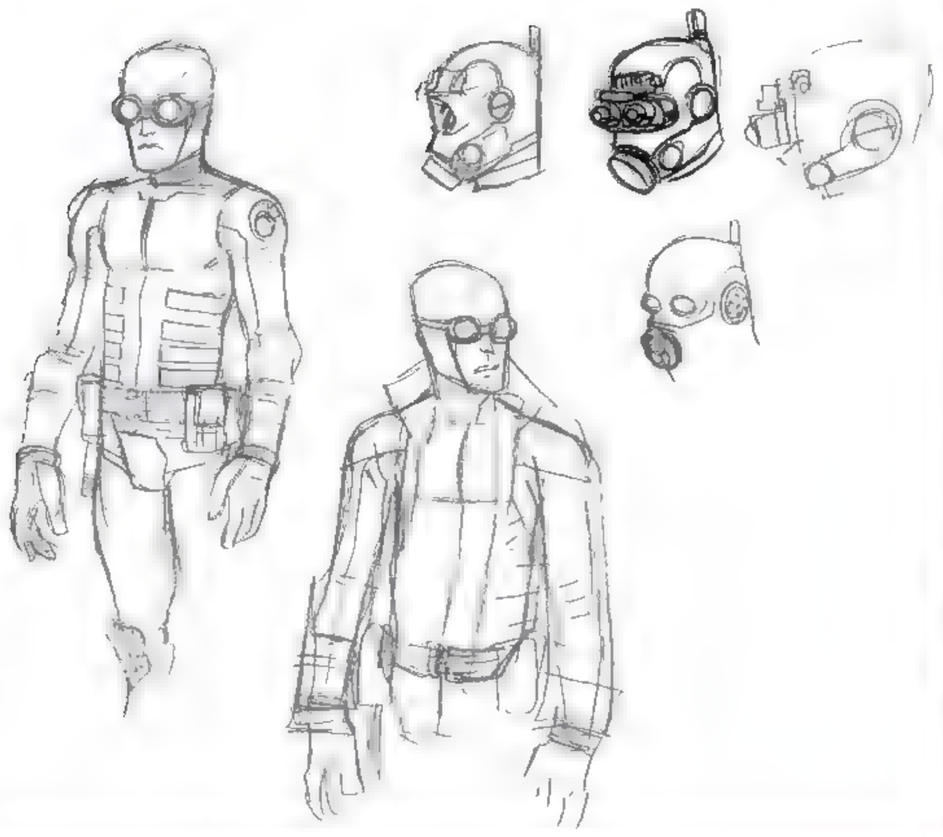
Nate: And finally we have his layouts for the backup that explained why Invincible wasn't actually in the Atom Eve mini. We made it all happen with teamwork!

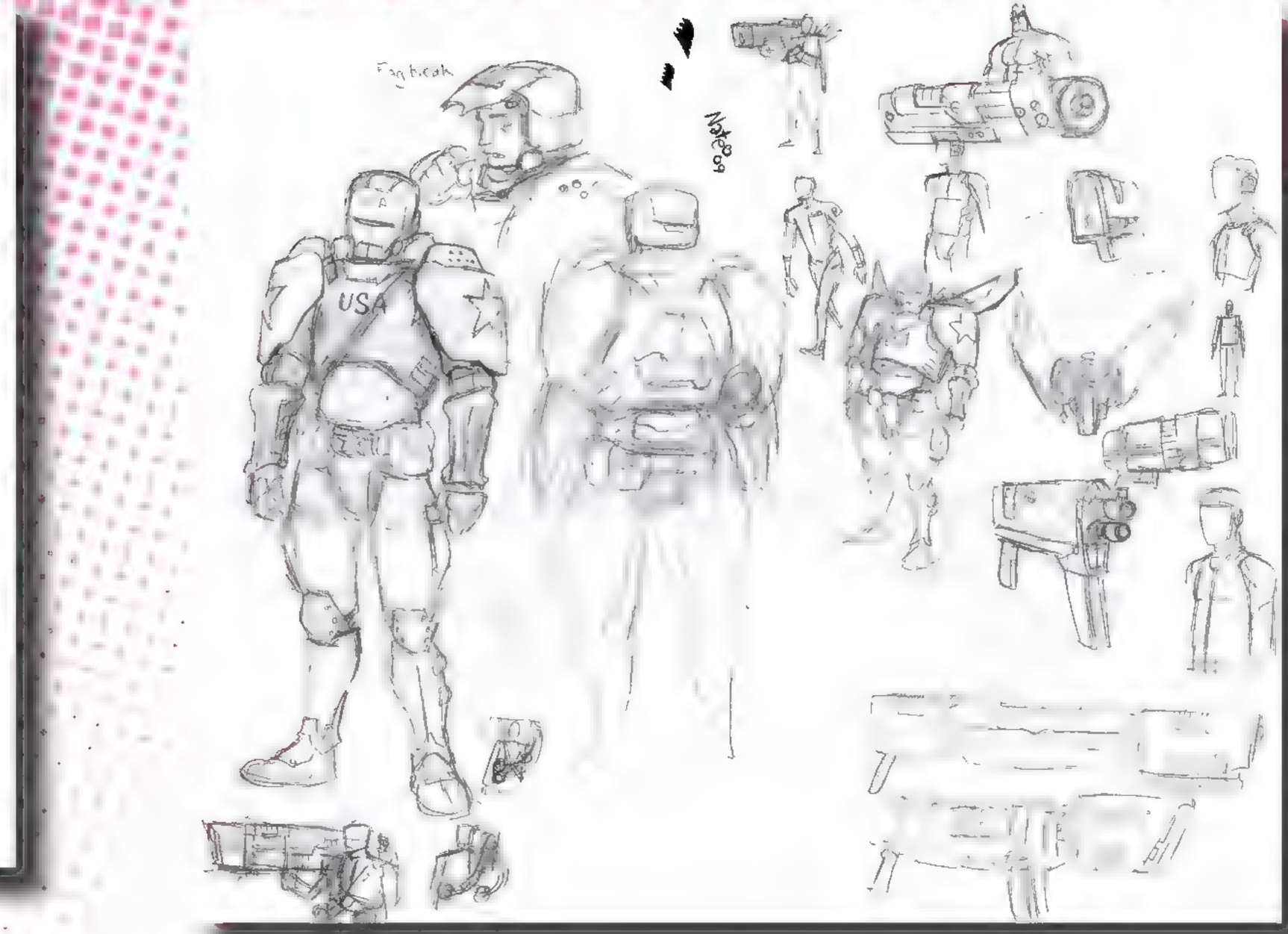




Benito: Here we have some sketches for Rex designs, including Radcliffe, Rex's pre-superhero stealth ninja suit, and Rex's sweet scooter outfit. Side note: unofficially, Rex's scooter's name is the Explo-ped.

Nate: Rex's assassin mask is one of my favorite little things. It was tough to come up with something that looked creepy without being distracting, something completely different from what people would know about him already. It was really fun to draw too!

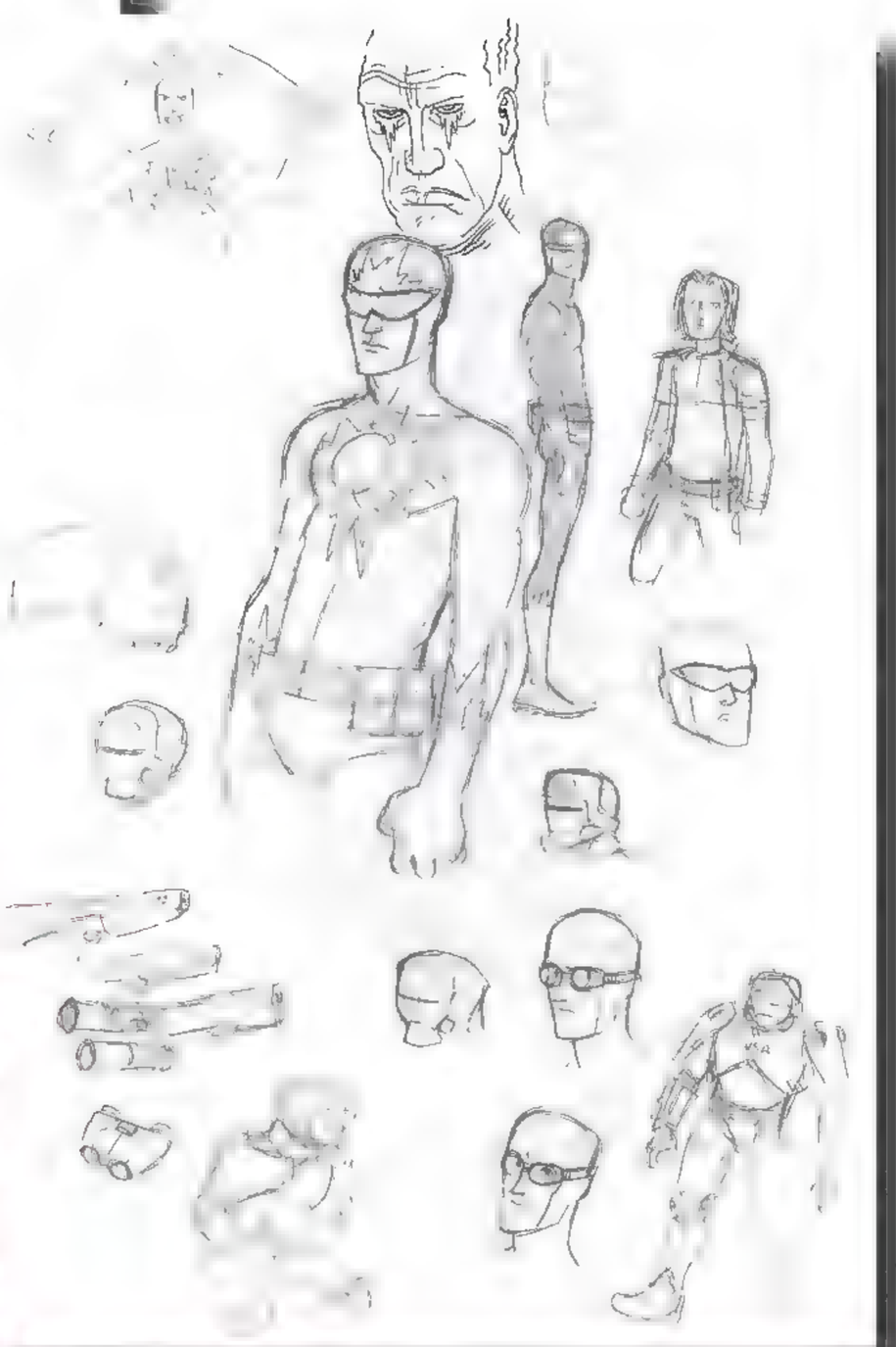


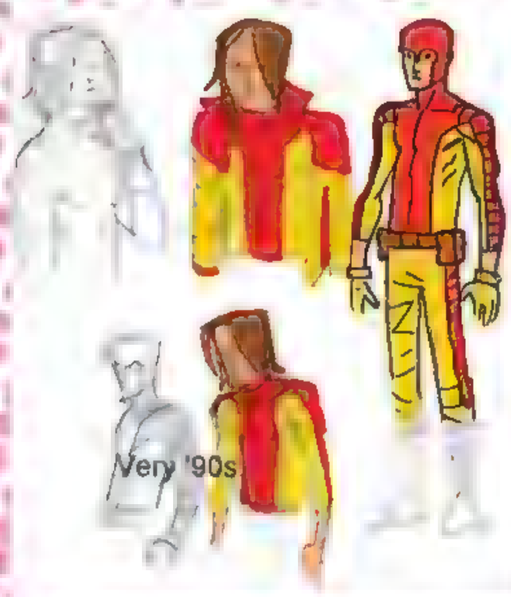


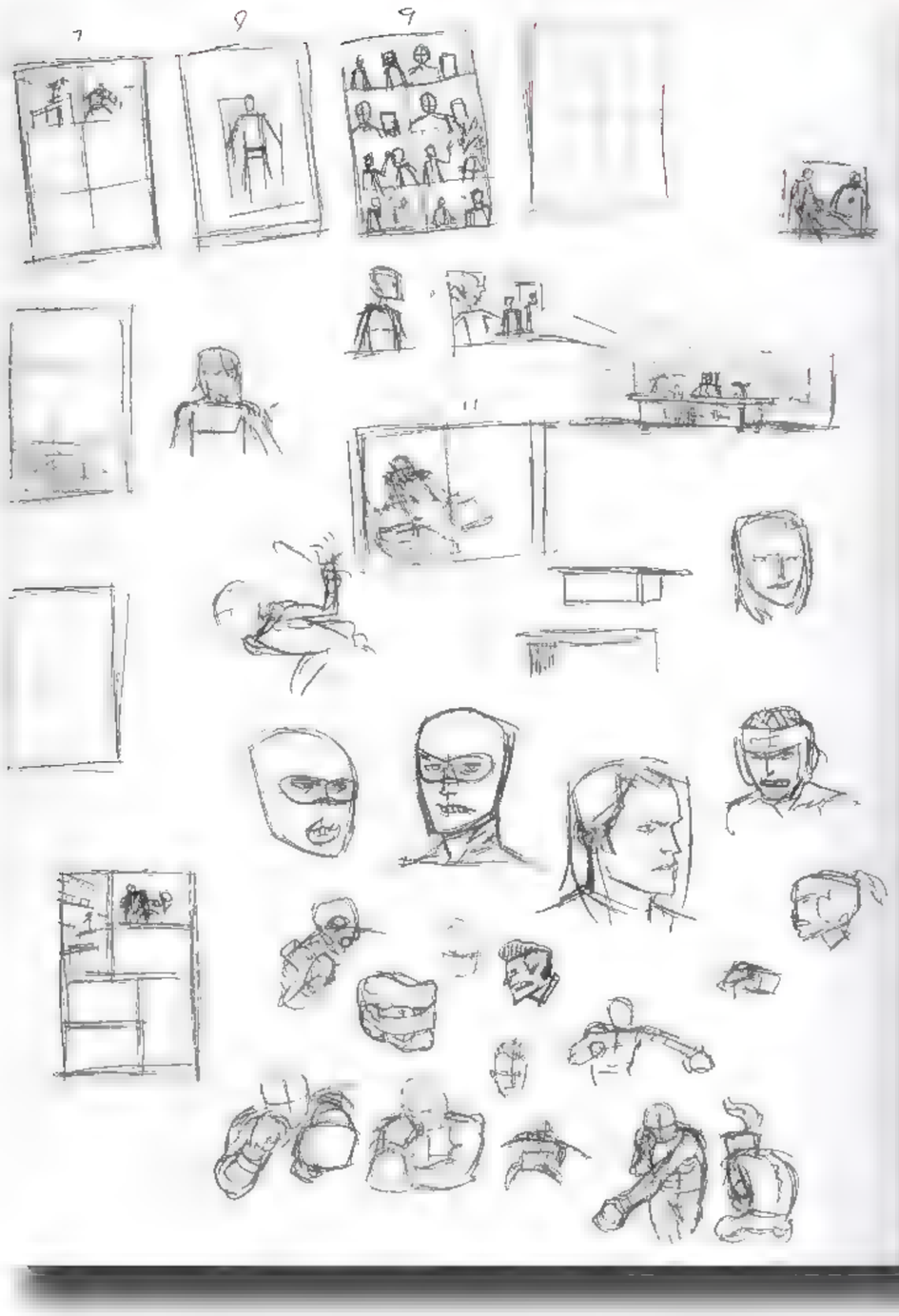
Nate: These are designs for the third issue, including Rex's totally sweet FIRST costume, some government thugs, and what maybe Rex wears underneath his jacket perhaps.

Benito: Wow, Nate, one of those sketches for Rex's early costume looks as many as four or five years older than the other. Perhaps you can elaborate on why that might be!

Nate: Gosh, I suppose I can since you've put me on the spot! It just so happens that four to five years ago, for fun, I tried to design the worst looking costume someone named Rex Splode could wear, imagining it as something he'd have designed himself, as opposed to tailor-to-the-capes Art Rosenbaum. When it came time for Eve to manifest a disguise for Rex in a pinch, I knew exactly what it should be. Serendipitous!

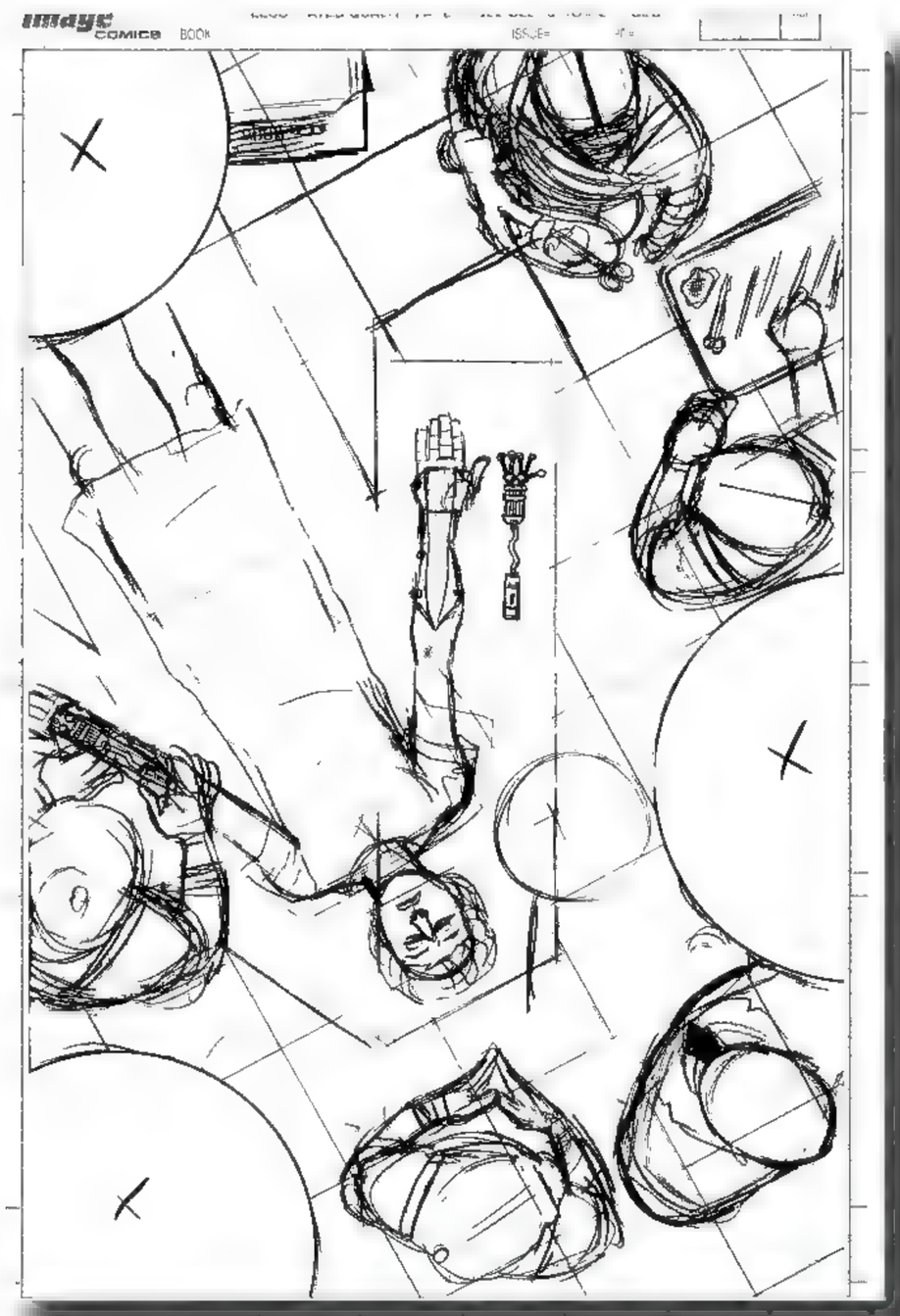






Benito: Here's another behind the scene look at layouts and thumbnails showing how Nate progresses from tiny scribbles to a full blown page.

Nate: FUN FACT: Man, half the time I was straight tracing pages from Khary Randolph's and Matt Roberts' backup origin stories, you know, the ones what we were hired to extrapolate upon! Finger lickin' good!



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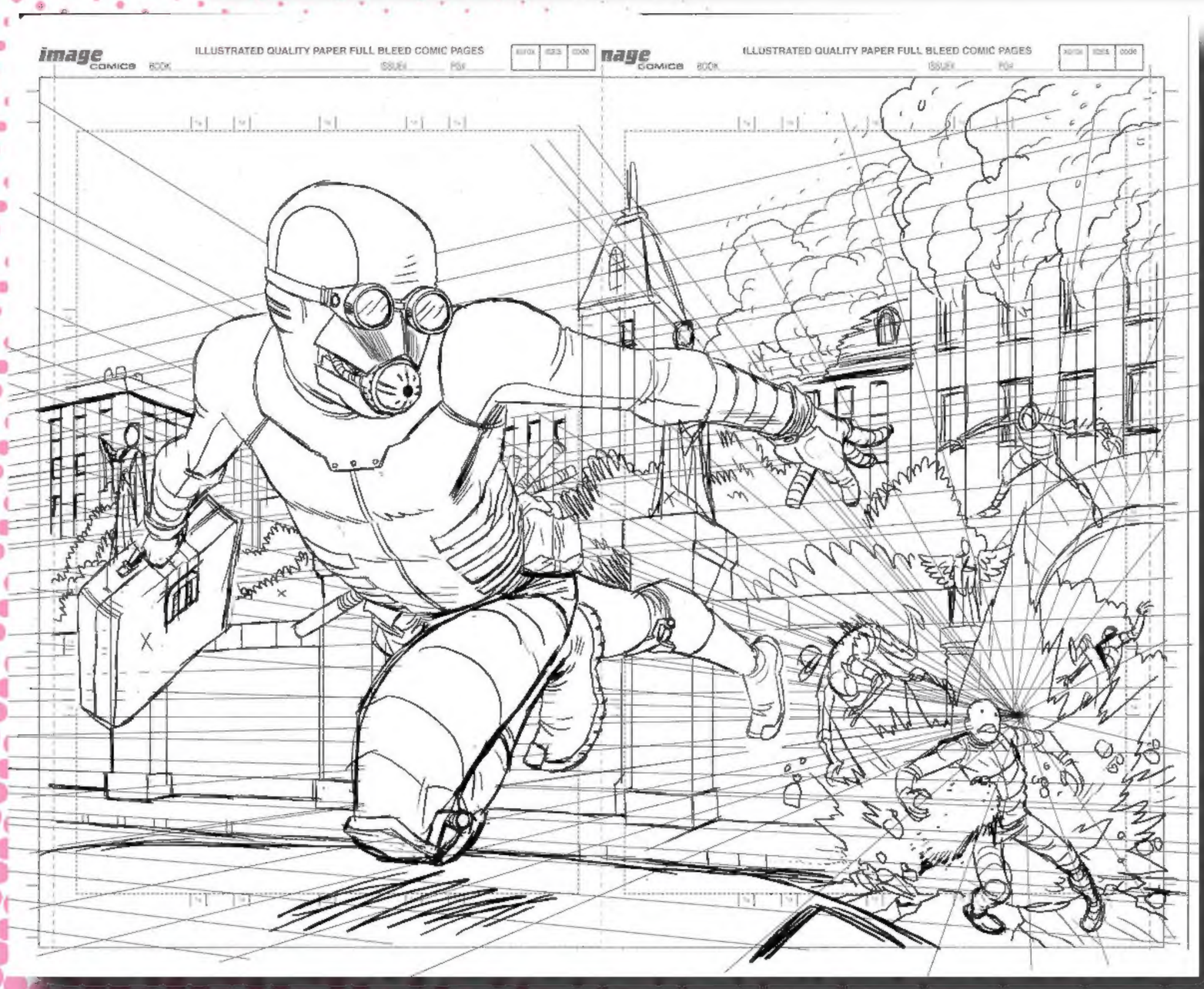
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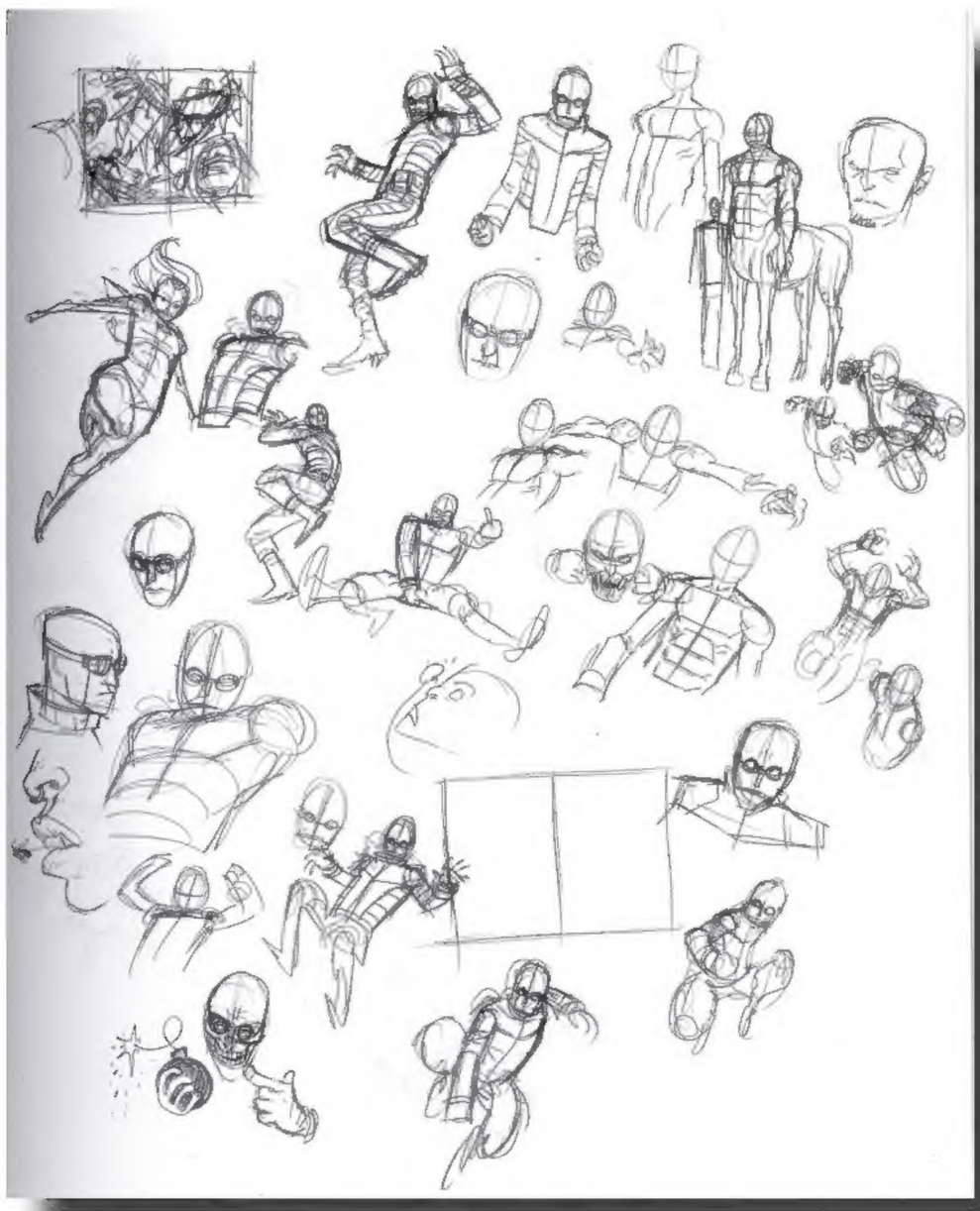

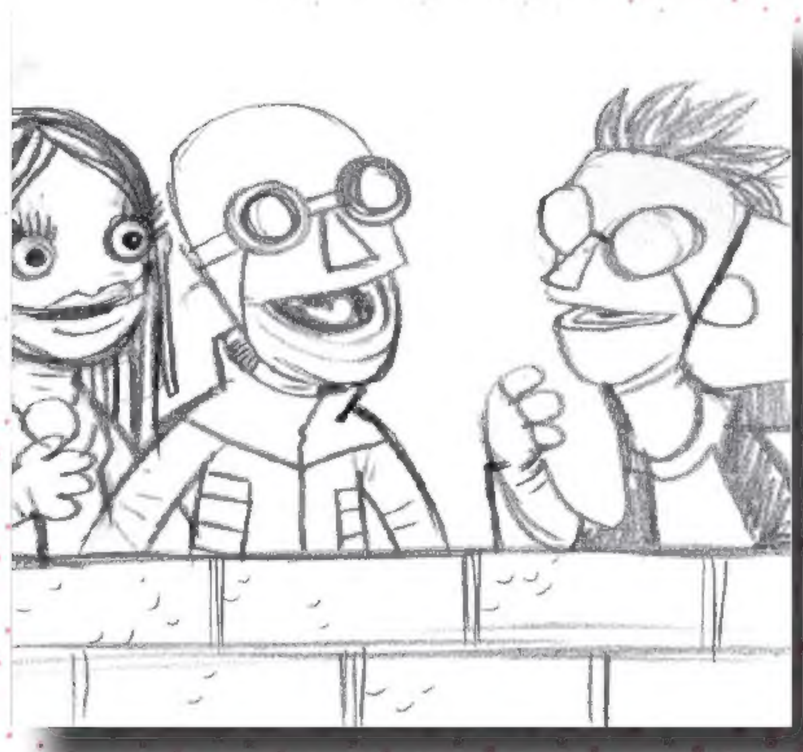

Nate: And to close things out here are a goofy sketch of Invincible, Eve, and Rex as Muppets and a heartfelt memorial to our loved and lost friend, Rex Splode.

Benito: Into eternity, my brother, hail and farewell! Thanks for reading everyone. CERENO OUT.

Nate: Bye, guys! Get out of my house.

ZONE